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⚠ WARNING!⚠

[image]

Well, well, well.

Hello, hello, hello~

Such a beautiful day it is to start the second volume of **Pangaea academy: Same old brand new frenemies.**

And of course, it is to avoid future misunderstanding/s, hate, and complaints—because we all hate complaints—I will list (some) of the things you have to look out for.

If you're a new reader here and you just stumble upon this good ol' book of mine.

*Hello, hi, salutations and greetings to you newcomer. This is the second part lovie and I recommend reading the **first book** to avoid confusion.*
【 Check my profile to see book 1 】

BUT, if you're an old reader here.

Welcome back and congratulations, you have successfully reached the book ✌~

Let us all give ourselves a round of applause! 👏👏👏

Yaayyy ✧ ヽ(⁰▿⁰)ノ ✧

Anyways, let's start!

The things you should look out from this book are the followings:

° **Incest** *(oh boy how we all hated this ^^)*

° **Grammatical Errors** *(English isn't my first language, I apologize)*

° **Inaccurate Translations** *(Don't hurt google translator, she/he has*

done nothing wrong! QAQ)

˚ **Inaccurate History** *(I'm not good with history. I just search it on Google most of the time.)*

˚ **Oblivious, dense, naive, innocent main character** *(for old readers out there, the suffering we have to carry while we read philipia taken advantage of, But we love it >//<)*

˚ **Strong languages** *(I don't know why I still bother adding this, but I will just give you a heads up~)*

˚ **R@ pe** *(... No comment, you guys won't give a poop anyways, but you can always skip it. I respect that)*

˚ **Mature scenes** *(It's the same as r@pe but at the same time it's not— you get what I mean)*

˚**Mention of wars, etc...** *(it's a countryhuman fanfic for a reason)*

˚ **Typos** *(Ahhh, my old nemesis. ..)*

˚**Reverse Harem cliches** *(One girl LOVED/LIKED by all men ^^ short explanation why there aren't some of your favorite ships ^^ sorry not sorry)*

•

I guess that is all of it (for now)

Please make sure you've read this part so that we won't have any misunderstandings, just wanted to repeat that again.

You know I love you all (ง'̀-'́)

Sorry if this warning took so much of your time so I'll just end it here and let you enjoy the second book.

Welcome to pangaea academy: Revelation.

Much love (˘ ³˘)♥

Prologue

[image]

If a watch can be rewinded.

Does it mean you can rewind your past and change it?

If so..

What part of your history will you try to change?

Will you change the part where you embarrassed yourself? Or the part where you made an enemy? A choice? Or...

Someone's death?

And if you *can* change it, although it'll happen again-- in a different way, in a different path, in a different time?

Is it merely unchangeable? Or is it fate?

I'm philipia, daughter of Perla and Kati. Rulers and leaders of the Philippines.

I'm the third and the youngest of my two older twin brothers.

Gregorio del Pilar the eldest twin and Martial Law the younger twin.

I was both sheltered, taken care of, and loved dearly by my family.

And if only I can control time.

I can control the *events*, I can control what *happened*, I can control their ***death***.

Maybe, I would still be loved and basking in warmth of my beloved parents. My *irreplaceable* parents that were both killed in a gruesome wars.

My mother Perla was shot during the Spanish colonization.

My father was also shot and stabbed during the American colonization.

Everything changed from then on.

And as time mercilessly ticks. We three lived, the heirs, the only surviving royal bloods. Of course that was before we knew our dearest uncle magdalo-- now named Jack. Is alive, is breathing and talking and smiling.

Oh how merciful this merciless time is.

But even so, there is something that time *can't* change.

A position between two choices.

A *betrayal* to stop my brothers revenge against Spain, America and Japan.

Or a *massacre* also from my brother, to continue his plan, to remove their names off the map.

I know I will have consequences, in whatever choices.

But I'm conflicted, I'm deeply conflicted.

I don't know which place I should try to belong.

Pangaea is a strong country, it's a name that is widely known, everything the earth shows, they own it, from the deepest ocean to the highest sky.

If I try to side with my brother martial, the person who took care of me over the decades... My friends who I know are trying their best to change will disappear like air.

And the guilty conscience will slowly crawl it's way to me, I cannot accept it.

But at the same time I also cannot accept to side with my brother

Gregorio. For the better or worse, if his plan succeeded. Brother martial will be *killed*.

Both choices ends up with **death**.

How I wish this merciless time, could just just stop and rewind back.

Go back, to where it all started.

I want to go back to where it all begun.

I want to go back before I went to Pangaea, met my enemies and lived with them; I want to go back before I met different country leaders who became my closest friends...

How frustrating, How *irritating*.

Tell me...

Would everything be different if I change one single thing from the past? Or would everything be different...

If I'm the one who *disappeared* instead?

———————

< < < End of prologue

> > > Coming Chapter 1 : Welcome back to Pangaea

———————

[No facts for today cause it's only the prologue chapter, but I hope y'all enjoyed it~]

[Welcome back to pangaea academy]

Chapter 1 : Welcome back to Pangaea

(There won't be as many grammatical errors and typos because I, D-kun, am back)

[Enjoy~]

_____

[image]

My eyes slowly open and adjust to the light of the room. As I gained full focus, I saw the same ceiling I always have; sitting up from my position I look around and I'm in my old dorm room.

My piano and guitar is still there. My study table still had all my pens and notebooks and what not. The wall had the three yellow-star design, with all the pictures of my siblings and shows. The mini greenhouse and bonsai tree that J gave to me as a gift is still there.

A bird stand at the corner where Athena stays when she delivered a letter from my unknown friend.

Our school uniform: green crop top vest, grayish green shirt, dark green ribbon (for girls), and dark green skirt. It hangs outside my wardrobe with my shoes scattered below. All of this was provided by the school.

I stretch my arms and back and took a deep breath before exhaling. "That's right, it's Monday."

I turn to my clock that shows it's *05:20 am.* Hearing some pots and pans clicking outside my room, I assume it's Brunei preparing breakfast like he always does.

I hopped out of my disturbed bed and exit my room, closing the door behind me. I was immediately greeted with the scent of eggs,

bacon and coffee. Trailing it, I can slowly hear the sizzling on the pan, the boiling of the water, the soft clink of spoons and mug.

Walking through the hallway, I stopped in my tracks when the door besides my room opens, revealing Malaysia with half open eyes, stumbling forward like a zombie.

He yawned and rubbed his eyes "Good mowning... Philipia."

I smiled "Good morning Malaysia, how was your sleep?" I replied and we both walk to the dining area.

"It was good, my alarm startled me from a good dream." He responded, as he regained his senses and bodily functions bit by bit.

Brunei placed a plate of eggs and a bowl of rice in the middle of the table. "That's good" he said to Malaysia, butting into our conversation, "So that you don't have to oversleep *again*." he crossed his arms on his chest, like an angry housewife who caught his husband drinking late and coming home at 2am in the morning.

"That was one time Brunei! One.Time!" Malaysia points a finger up, he grumpily sat down on his chair and slams his head on the table before we hear him snore.

"He'll wake up." I said, as Malaysia snores even louder.

"Hopefully..." Brunei continued, "would you like to drink something first?" I turn to Brunei, a soft smile in contrast to his frown earlier.

"I can make one myself, but thank you, Brunei." I said, heading to the kitchen.

"You can also help me with breakfast." Brunei trailing behind me, as I nodded in response.

"Sure, what can I help you with?" I offered while looking over the counter where pans were frying some bacon and of course: dried fish, the smell of which made my stomach rumbled.

Brunei gave me an apron and ties it for me from behind, "You can help me prepare the pancakes." He said before kissing the back of

my nape, which send shivers down my spine. He handed me a small frying pan before heading off.

I guess I'll make myself coffee afterwards.

It didn't take long before the rest of my friends begun waking up one by one. Israel got out with a toothbrush in his mouth as he prepared himself some coffee before spitting the excess bubble of paste in the kitchen sink and washing there instead. Which was personally nasty for me, his teeth are going to be brittle soon.

"We have our own bathroom for a reason Israel." Brunei scolded, hitting Israel on the head softly with a spatula.

Israel grinned and pats my head while I pour the thick pancake mix on the pan, "There's already a sink right here, why should I bother going back all to the way to my room?" He teased, to Brunei's chagrin. "Also, good morning angel" he added before winking at me and disappearing into the dining area.

"Everyone sure is lively on a Monday." I commented which Brunei shakes his head as if he's had enough first thing in the morning.

He turns to me and forced a smile that just barely hid his cringe. "Exactly, it's *Monday* they shouldn't be this lively."

I giggled as I flipped the pancake. Almost splattering into the ground, I screamed and Brunei jumped. We both laughed as the sun rose in the horizon.

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After making pancakes, I prepared myself some tea instead before Indonesia pops his head from the door, "I smell tea."

I turn to him "I am making tea, would you like some too?" He took

my offer as he stood besides me.

Brunei took all the food and placed them at the table where everyone is already gathered.

Malaysia finally woke up and is currently drinking Milo, Israel is drinking coffee while scrolling through his phone, and Germany is polishing his strange miniature statue of a woman while muttering under his breath with eyes closed.

"That's black tea!" Indonesia beamed and inhaled the warm, nose tickling smell.

I smiled at him and nodded "I've grown fond of it" I said, picking up the cup bringing it closer to my nose "don't you? Indonesia?"

Indonesia slowly turned red and looks away while scratching the back of his neck, "y-yeah..." He mumbled but just enough for me to hear.

"Hey, are you two gonna stay here or are you going to eat breakfast now?" We turn to Brunei who's looking at us with a gloomy expression.

Does he want some black tea as well? Good thing I prepared a whole set for everyone who would want one.

Indonesia grins, "We will" he replied and picked up the tray "I'll take it to the table, maybe Germs will have some."

I placed my cup down on the counter and removed my apron which Brunei helped me to hang it on the hook, I took my cup again and walked towards the dining room.

"Let's eat." Malaysia beams and was about to take one pancake when Germany stops him.

"Wait, let's pray first, this is a blessing from the goddess" he sternly said while looking at me.

Israel rolls his eyes and groans, "Alright, alright we get it, come on let's pray and eat so that we can go to school already. The professor

will have my neck if I'm late again."

We all held hands and Germany volunteered to lead the prayer, which Brunei stops him knowing his prayer will take a hundred paragraphs to finish.

I wonder what religion Germany is so loyal and devoted to? I admire that side of him; very religious, it's quite charming if you ask me if a man is religious.

Setting that thought aside, we all ate breakfast after saying grace.

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6 : 34 am

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I dusted my skirt on the front and stare at myself on my full body mirror, spinning around and examining myself; I think I'm ready to go.

Walking over to my study table, I gathered all the materials I'll need for today, including my phone because brother would be furious if I didn't answer his messages. Although he's understanding when I couldn't, considering he would text me sometimes while in the middle of class. Even though I told him not to.

I closed my bag and slung it over my shoulder. Before I leave, I went over to my mini greenhouse where I took one sampaguita flower and wore it on my left ear. "Okay, now I'm ready."

I hastily put on my school shoes that doesn't have any soles (thankfully) I turn to the small picture frame that rest on my night stand.

Kissing two of my fingers and pressing it to the picture, I smiled as I stare at my parents photograph. "I'll be going now" I bid and head

to my door, closing it behind me.

"Is it just me or did I get fat?" Israel asked while lifting his shirt showing his well formed V-line and abs. Such anatomy should be illegal, I don't think Israel grew fat, I think he grew fit.

Malaysia pats my back since I'm standing in the hallway while staring at Israel's abs "shall we?" He grinned and locks his arm around mine "Off to school!"

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6 : 45 am

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As we walk towards the school, many students greeted us and bow to us. It's always been like this everyday whenever a country leader passes by, signs of respect.

The dorm buildings were connected to the school through a long, wide outdoor hallway with a pergola. It's almost like a maze but once you get use to it, it's almost like it's written on the back of your hand.

While walking we saw Poland and Sweden at the distant also heading to school.

"Hey Indonesia 1.0!" Malaysia called which Poland flinched and turned around to our direction.

Poland furrowed his eyebrows and Indonesia groans. "Great, just great" he sarcastically said.

Malaysia laughed and so did Israel.

"Ladybug, good morning." Sweden takes my hand and kissed the back of it.

Brunei glares at him and immediately snatched my hand from Sweden before Germany sprays an alcohol that he suddenly pulled out from somewhere and Brunei wiped it like there was dirt on it.

Sweden blinks multiple times, a bit surprised like I am from the sudden action, Sweden holds back his laughter but couldn't contain it in the end and ends up laughing while holding his stomach, "Wow, not once have I seen Germany like this." he wipes a tear.

Poland shakes his head "I'm even more surprised you can handle him."

"Uh, actually, we don't." Israel corrected, "We just got used to it, that honestly we could care less."

"Righttt..." Poland responded "So? Are we just gonna stand here? Class is about to start."

Unanimous agreement was raised as we entered the premises, we all had to walk our separate ways since our classrooms are in different area and floors of the school.

I waved them goodbye as I head to mine and luckily, my room is on the second floor, East building where Malaysia and Indonesia are, although their rooms are still a bit further from mine so I had to stop to my room while they still walk to theirs.

I opened the door and everyone was already there.

Joe and China were talking but turned there heads to the door and immediately waved at me "G'morn'n" Joe greeted.

"Good morning Joe and China." I greeted back and placed my bag on my chair.

"How was your sleep?" China asked.

I smiled and shrugged, "The same as always: comfortable." I replied while taking out my book for the first subject for today.

China hummed in response. Joe groaned and leaned back on his chair, "Mine was bad, I couldn't bat a sleep cause I didn't finish my

assignment."

"You mean didn't *do* your assignment" China stated and raised a brow.

Joe scoffs and laughs as if it was a joke but his smile immediately turned into a frown, "Yeah... I am so dead."

I laughed and China nodded since he already knew this would happen.

"You can copy mine" China said with a lenient tone, he stood up and went to his seat that is on the first lane, third row. Joe immediately beams.

"Whoah! Really? Nice China!" He gave him a thumbs up as Joe hurriedly takes out his notebook and pen, ready to copy.

Normally I would interfere and say it's wrong, Joe would get used to it and it would be bad for him once he's asked about it. But to see him this happy just makes me change my mind, although I would really recommend he do it himself.

"Ohayou!!" Suddenly, the door burst open revealing J, with his usual pink jacket that has cat ears on his hoodie; and behind J is Spain.

Seeing him makes me recall all that had happened last month. The incident at the hospital, the miscarriage, the memories that Tethys didn't allow to be erased for some reason and Tokyo.

Right now, Tokyo is held by Pangaea in a place where nobody knows. Tethys reasured me that she's okay, that Tokyo and the baby are okay. He kept his promise not to hurt them which I'm thankful for.

But he can't promise her safety anymore once she finally gave birth.

To simplify it.

If Tokyo finally gave birth, the verdict of her life will be declared. She broke many rules, and the most crucial rule she broke was her

banishment from Pangaea.

Apparently she had help getting inside, nobody knows who helped her or where they are, Tokyo herself doesn't know, all she can tell us was that a package arrived in her house one day with clear instructions on how to get inside Pangaea undetected temporarily.

They could've traced the package where it was from, but even though Pangaea is the world's most advance country, years ahead of everybody. They couldn't trace it, as if the package was sent from someone that doesn't exist, or maybe someone who knows Pangaea inside and out.

But I set those lingering things aside and focused more on her baby. When she found out Spain was never, truly the father, and oddly enough it made me relieved. She bursted. Saying she wants to get rid of it and even tried to stab herself to remove the "parasite" -- what she calls; from her body.

It broke my heart to a million pieces to hear her say such a thing to a baby who did nothing wrong.

So in the meantime, they kept her alive for the sake of the baby, but like I said once she gave birth, Tethys could no longer promise me if he can still spare her or not.

J gave up too, saying Tokyo is no longer his sister the moment she wanted to get rid of the baby.

Kyoto balled her eyes out the whole day at the hospital where Tokyo was temporarily sedated.

And Tokyo's father; Sir Japanese Empire. He remained quiet, he didn't interfere knowing the consequences, and he didn't even come.

All he did say to Kyoto that day was that-- *"I don't have a daughter who's carrying a baby with a blood of a commoner."*

That's when I knew, all he cared for was power. He cared for Tokyo because her mother was a pure royal, her ancestors had no mix blood of a commoner unlike J's and Kyoto's mother. But now that Tokyo has somewhat "tarnished" that bloodline.

That bloodline of pure cities.

He immediately turned his back at her like nothing.

I leaned back on my chair and sighed, although I feel someone's eyes on my back. Is it Spain? Or someone else?

"Yo! My lady." I look up to see South with a grin on his face "Now isn't that a pretty sight." He taps my nose.

I smiled and greeted "Good morning, South"

South chuckled and took a vacant seat next to me even though his table is at the fifth lane, fourth row while mine is at the third lane, first row.

"Is something the matter? Is it Spain? Is it still *awkward*?" He whispered while watching Spain on the side of his eyes. I glanced back at him over my shoulder and he's reading a book on his table--examining him more.

The cuts on his lips and cheek is barely visible now. Thank goodness, he wouldn't tell me how he got those injuries so I'm still worried.

But, looking at him, he seems okay than before.

When our eyes accidentally met, I didn't realized I've been staring for too long and it proves that it's true. It still is very *awkward* even though a month has passed. But that isn't the reason why I'm a bit down, it's because I'm worried for Tokyo's sake.

I know I can't bring up her name anymore, Tethys forbid anyone who would talk about her or even say her name at all; everyone agreed including J.

I guess the new "Tokyo" would be her baby. It's already been decided.

"No, it's not." I replied to south.

South didn't look convinced but didn't even pry me anymore, he

simple smiled and let's it go before patting my head "Okay, but just so you know if you have problems I'm here to listen."

I nodded "Thank you, South"

"Yo Southy." Joe called.

South looks at him with a bored expression and raised a brow, "what is it, Americano?"

"Help me with this, I can't understand China's handwriting"

"Ugh, if you can't read it, why would I be able to read it?"

Joe looks up to him, "cause you're Asian? Duh?"

"*Duh* my ass! We aren't *all* the same!" South smacks the back of Joe's head.

"Ow! Hey!"

"Let me see that crap!" He snatched the notebook and Joe points the part he didn't understand.

South looked perplexed, pushing the notebook from him to get a better look while squinting his eye before pulling it back to read it closely, still squinting his eye.

"So?" Joe asked, tapping his pen, chasing the time that's ticking.

Their conversation tuned itself out in the background as I got lost in my thoughts.

Time; if only I can rewind time then maybe I could change some things. Then again, if it's fated to happen, I can change the situation but still ends up the same.

"Uhhh... No" South firmly said and shoves the notebook back to Joe.

"Oh, come on." Joe pleaded.

"Ask him instead." South retorted. Joe sighs and placed the notebook down again.

"He left for 'secretary' duties" he said while air-quoting it.

"Can I see? I'm considered Asian too." I smiled while pointing at myself.

Joe nods frantically and obediently hands me the notebook. Surprisingly, China's notes are clean and organized, except his handwriting. I giggled knowing that part of him still hasn't changed.

His infamous doctor handwriting that's considered illegible.

"Reminiscing... A part of our..." I leaned closer, as if trying to decipher a code "...memory."

I gave it back to joe with a baffled look before looking back at the notebook, "This stupid word is 'memory'? I can't even see the letter 'm' in here."

South snorted and I giggled. Typical China, he's more used to his countries writing I guess, even though it's been a long time.

"Just copy it already you're running out of time." South said. We all glanced to the clock on top of the board *6:54 am*

Is it just me or is time really slow today?

South then tried to help Joe copy China's homework while I leaned back to my chair.

I should feel happy today like everyone else despite being Monday, and everyone hates Monday.

But why do I feel like today, there's going to be something shocking...

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8 : 09 am (Break hour)

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"Wheeeww! Oh mannn, that was close, the moment the professor entered was the moment I finished copying that homework was god tier." Joe leans back on his chair while catching his breath.

The whole time, he was anxious whether our teacher knows he copied it or not, it created bullet size beads forming on his forehead.

The class ended like usual and Joe was worried over nothing... At least, that's what the professor wants him to think, but I won't tell Joe.

I stood up from my seat and took my wallet, "It's break hour, are you guys going to buy something?" I asked.

"Nope! I got myself some sandwich." South shows me two sandwich in a container that he pulled from his bag.

I look over to Joe "I'm on a diet." he smiled.

I nodded, "Alright, text me if you change your mind and if you want something." I waved my phone before putting it inside my pocket.

"Ah! I wanna go with you!" J jumps from his seat, taking his bread and box of milk and followed me towards the door.

"I..." We halted and turn to Spain who looks like he wants to say something but hesitant, he draw his hand back that looks like he's trying to reach us before fiddling with his tie. "I uhh..."

I turn to China who's narrowing his eye at Spain, J was infront of me while Joe and south slowly stood up. They're still wary of spain and he knows this since he doesn't react to their involuntary actions. Instead, he's anticipating and scared of what my reaction would be.

But, of course my reaction would be obvious.

"Would you like to come with us too?" I asked as I held out my hand with a big welcoming smile.

They may be wary of him but, Spain is still the same Spain I first met on the first day of school. Kind, understanding and a good friend.

Maybe his sudden memory that hit him like a huge wave, must've overwhelmed him. I can't blame him on that, I would probably be the same if I were him.

Spain soften his expression and nods as he follows behind us.

"Hey Spain." J spoke.

"Yeah?" Spain replied, a bit quiet.

J points his cheek, "Sorry about that" he said.

Spain chuckled and lightly punched his chest, "It's fine J, I deserved it, and it didn't even hurt it felt like a girl was punching me."

I stop and blink a few times, "Who punched who?" I furrowed my eyebrows as I faced them both.

"Uhhh..." They both said in synch and glanced each other.

"J accidentally punched me when I tried to scare him..."

Suspicious.

"Y-yeah" J started waving his hands in the air, reenacting the scene and Spain joined him as well.

This is suspicious, I can tell they aren't telling me something, but if they can't tell me; it's better not force them.

I sighed "Okay, I believe you" I responded and continued walking towards the cafeteria.

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8 : 30 am (First floor, 3rd cafeteria)

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I sat in one of the round tables as I placed my snacks: Carbonara and sprite. I'm so happy this cafeteria provides all the world's types of snacks.

It's still 8 so the lunch sets are still not made-- Pangaea truly is the world's super continent.

Spain then sets his own besides mine; Empanadas and a bottle of water.

Now we're waiting for J, he always takes his time to buy since he can't choose, one of the reasons why he doesn't get along with the cook saying he can't possibly choose one since he cooked all his favorite dishes.

"Philipia..." I turn to Spain who has this careful look "I'm sorry. I know it's still awkward, for you mostly but, I don't want to be separated from you either... It's just... "

I placed my hand on his and hush him down, "I understand Spain, I'm ready to let it be at the past and move on, let's move on... It wasn't just me who lost someone that day"

I can see him holding back his tears, his trembling lips that he's biting is obvious that tears are threatening to spill.

"Whoah, what a sight, the Spanish is about to cry." We both turn around to see Scotland there holding a can of soda.

"Stand your ground Scotland." Ireland pops behind him and walk towards me, "Good morning philipia, what're you eating?" He smiled as he examined my food.

"Carbonara." I answered.

Ireland smiled and pats my head "So cute, sorry about Scotland he's in a foul mood today." he nudges Scotland who's expression changed, from sour to flushed when he looked at me.

Is just me or is everyone having a fever today?

"Not surprised if a Scottish is as wild as a viking."

Ireland covers his mouth and holds back a laughter "Pfft! Oh Scotland! He got ya there sham!" Ireland chuckled.

Scotland rolls his eyes at Spain and turn to me, his cheeks growing red the seconds pass by, our eyes are locked.

"I'll take my leave!" Scotland swiftly turn to his heel and walks away.

"Ha? But Philipia is here!" He yelled as Scotland's walking pace fasten. Ireland sighed and waved at us. "See ya around" he winked before chasing after Scotland who's already far away.

"Yo! What did I miss?" We turn to J who's tray is full of snacks, as he stuffed something down his mouth that didn't even look edible.

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8 : 46 am

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I checked my money while we walk back to our room "I knew it." I said to myself.

"What's wrong?" J asked.

"My change is too much, supposedly I should only have 45 Gaea, but I got 55 Gaea" I showed them my money.

[A/N:: Gaea is the currency for Pangaea]

"Nice." J responded.

I held the money close, "Not nice! It's considered stealing now that I

know, I'll return it, you guys can go back first" I said and turn to my heel.

"You sure Philipia? We can go with you!" Spain yelled.

I wave my hand, "it's okay! There's only 10 minutes left before class resume, I'll be fast don't worry!!"

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8 : 50 am

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I returned the extra change and the lady at the cafeteria thanked me for returning it, I beamed as it made me happy and motivated to be more honest from now on.

Cheering myself, I hurriedly walked back to my room.

"Gotta hurry, gotta hurry..." I mutter to myself as I walk-run in the hallway.

When I see my classroom, I walked much faster but my right arm was suddenly yanked to the right hall and is being dragged somewhere.

Deja Vu, I've been in this situation before.

I removed the person's hand around me and turn towards them "I knew it, North."

He smirked and leaned against the wall, "I missed that."

I breathed out and fix my crumpled uniform "Good morning to you too."

"Good morning." North pushed himself against the wall and walked towards me. He bring his hand up to caress my left cheek and his

thumb lightly rubbing underneath my eye.

"Is there something you need North? Because dragging me by force somewhere won't help." I scolded.

"Hey." he whispered in a husky tone ignoring my statement just now.

North sure does love to drag people in a part of the school where there's not much students, I don't really walk around the place so I still don't get the full lay out of the premises.

The way North looks at me though, was deep. He wants to say something but he can't, he wants to do something but he can't. I wonder what's holding him back from what he wants to do?

What does he want to do?

"Can I kiss you right now?" He asked.

I tilt my head to the side, he wants a kiss? Oh! Is it like how I asked mama for a kiss? Did that mean, the first time I met him he kissed me roughly was the same reason?

Geez if I knew he just wanted a kiss like how I asked mama a kiss.

Then maybe I didn't have to fight back and just give it to him.

"Sure." I simply answered and closed my eyes.

I waited and waited yet nothing has happened.

I slightly opened my left eye to see what's going on, North was just standing there holding my cheek since earlier and staring at me with a flushed face.

I'm considering Monday is fever day.

"N-nevermind!" He pulls himself back and walk away, until he paused and glanced back at me from his shoulder "I'll get a kiss, next time... For sure."

His ears are probably on fire since it's so red "uhmm okay?" I waved yet he was already gone. That was weird, I thought he asked me for a kiss? How old is North again? Normally only kids would ask those, oh maybe he just misses his mom.

I feel bad, was I perhaps insensitive?

I jumped a little when I suddenly hear the bell ring that echoed in the hallway.

"Oh dear me"

I didn't think twice to run to my room even though it wasn't far to where North dragged me, getting to the door right before the teacher came around the corner.

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10 : 30 am

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"One more subject and it's lunchhhhh!!!!!!!" J squealed as he stretch his arms back. I closed my notebook for the finished subject just now and placed it inside my bag before taking out another notebook for the next one.

"Shit!" Joe exclaimed, I turn to him and his face grew pale. "I forgot we also have Madam Permians homework!"

South laughed and showed off his notebook where he definitely made his.

Joe growled and gripped on to his pen that broke in half, "I have my homework Joe, you can copy it while you still have time" I said and gave him mine.

Joe beamed and turn to South to sticks out his tongue and showed

the pink of his eye.

"Thanks Mahal!"

I froze a bit and so did he when he suddenly called me that.

Is his memory...

"Huh? Mahal? Now why would I say that?" He asked himself as he too is confused, did he purposely said that or was it involuntary? Did it just slipped his mouth or does his lips still remember me?

"Y-yeah... I wonder." I nervously laughed, looking away but I saw Spain looking at us, knowing him, he probably has an idea what it means.

Or not? I mean Mahal also means *expensive* so maybe I'm just thinking way too much.

Joe bends his knuckles and flex his shoulder for a more comfortable position as he's ready to copy my homework. Joe is smart, really smart but, I don't think he's using it.

"Alright, I'm ready to cop--"

"Ready for what exactly? Mr. America?" Everybody froze from that strict voice that's full of authority.

We all turn towards the door where miss principal is standing and behind her is our supposedly teacher for the next subject; Miss Permian.

Joe's expression can't be identify, but I can tell the very air and life was sucked out of him, kind of like '*the scream*' painting when he saw miss principal standing there.

She dismissed him and walked towards the front of the class and stood there with her tight pencil skirt and shirt that's three buttons opened showing her cleavage and lacey bra.

Miss principal probably shops in the kids section, I can see her whole curves, it looks so tight, isn't she uncomfortable?

"I know you're all confused as of the moment why I'm here" she said and her voice echoed in the quiet room, she placed her hands on the desk at the front "Miss Permian here won't be attending her classes--"

Everyone suddenly cheered, ignoring Miss Permians scolding.

"--temporarily"

They immediately frowned and groaned, slumping back in their seats.

"So the homework that is supposedly passed today, won't be passed" she narrows her gaze at Joe who flinched under her stare "but it doesn't mean it's class will stop, because we have a substitute who'll take over."

I feel nervous and I felt a chill on my back.

"He's here actually and I'm here to introduce him to you" she stood up straight and looks over at Miss Permian who immediately got the message; opened the door for this mysterious substitute teacher.

"Don't be shy, come in please."

We heard a chuckle before soft steps that seems to bring a heavy tension, walk in "Me? Nervous?"

That voice...

Our eyes grew wide when the person from the other side of the door entered.

Red, white and black. Eyes that seem to hypnotize you and smile that brings fear to people.

"I know you're all in shock, but you're safe when you're in the territory of Pangaea" miss principal reasured.

But we aren't reasured...

"Please introduce yourself" she stated.

The man before all of us, smirked and wrote his name on the board, "my name is Third Reich, call me professor Reich."

I didn't even realized that I've been clutching on to my skirt really hard.

I can still remember the day Israel came to our country, he was the most wounded, catching for his breath and his people desperate for help as all the places they knocked, closed their doors on them.

"H-help them please, even if you ignore me just please take the women and children... I beg you please..."

My heart clenches at every word he said that day, wheezing and coughing up blood, used bandages wrapped around his arms and head, shirt torn and ripped to pieces.

I didn't hesitate to accept their plead, to accept their begs. Because nobody deserved it, nobody; not even the most sinful man.

That day, Israel thanked me, all his people thanked me and it didn't take long for all his energy to subside and immediately fell into a deep slumber while my people helped him.

My brother didn't reject it either saying it's stupid that people didn't even help them, it just shows how much of a people person he was...

At least that was before until the Japanese tried to take over and hell broke loose.

"Now that your substitute teacher has introduce himself, I hope tomorrow you can all get along, of course you can start your class today is all up to you." Miss principal announced before leaving with miss Permian following behind her.

Now it was just us and him. He stood there, black polo shirt, red tie, office pants and glasses. He looks so much like Germany, he looks so much like a proper teacher but deep down. He's more than that...

"I can understand if some of you recognize me and hate me." he said, placing his attendance book on the table. His eyes

momentarily flying to me before staying his gaze.

"Everyone hates you" South berated which everyone turn to him with a baffled look. South was wearing a look of obvious detest. Eyebrows furrowed and eyes glaring, but professor Reich didn't even budge, he wasn't even bothered that South talked to him in a disrespectful manner.

"Oh really? That's nice, the more reason to stay, then maybe you will all listen well" professor Reich said and smiled like it was nothing.

South clicked his tongue and placed both feet on his desk, sitting there like he's just outside chilling.

"Since this is my first day I'd like to get to know everyone." He stood in front of his desk and leaned on it while arms crossed, "Starting with you and so on."

He pointed the student at the first lane first row to stand and introduce himself "State your name and things about yourself." Professor Reich said.

He looked nervous as he kept looking around and couldn't even look straight at professor Reich who's staring at him, examining him, and studying his every action.

He must feel uncomfortable...

He stated his name and things that he like and professor Reich nods, like a real teacher would before getting to the next student and when it was my turn (since I'm also at the front row) he gives me a sign of stop.

"I'll save the best for last." he smirked and everyone begun muttering.

China raised his hand which professor Reich nods at "I don't get why you have to save her for the last... Sir" it sounds like it was hard for him to say that word, but China is a student council secretary and a proper student, he had no choice.

Professor Reich laughed "Well she is a girl, a country leader at that. I'm quite interested to hear about her more." he smiled like he always does.

China couldn't talk back anymore, since it was rather a straightforward answer. It took a couple of minutes after my classmates all introduced themselves, well, some of them were nervous, some didn't care or just simply didn't know what's happening, and some are wary, angry or scared or a mix of all three.

"Now that everyone is introduced; except our lady here, you can now tell us your name and things about yourself." He smiled, and it wasn't a good one.

I swallowed and hesitantly stand up, for a second I felt my knees weaken. I've been nervous and tense since earlier, I wonder how South can insult him head on. I admire your courage now South, I really do.

I cleared my throat and look down, "I uhmm..."

"Face me, speak loud and clear" he sternly asked and I did. Slowly looking up to his sky blue eyes, lighter than Joe's blue ones "Good, you may continue." I feel a heavy tension around me.

"Uhm, I'm P-Philipia from the Philippines, professor..." I mumbled the last part, shrinking between my shoulders and looking down again, avoiding his gaze.

"Tell us about yourself, miss Philipia."

"Sir I don't thin--"

Professor stops china with a single gesture "tell us, about your pretty yellow eyes..."

I jolted and froze on the spot. I didn't even realize how long I've been standing there that I didn't even feel my legs giving out, if it wasn't for him tapping on my desk that pulled me out of my senses.

Stumble down to my seat causing me to land on my chair, Joe held

my shoulders from behind, catching me.

Professor laughed and clasp his hands, "Now then, since I get to know all of your names and learned something from each and one of you, this concludes today's introduction." he announced as if just now was nothing.

He checked his watch and took his attendance book, "See you tomorrow, students" he bid and exit the room. The way he said students sounded more like *experiments*.

A massive sigh of relief went through the entire room; the entire time we were with him felt like an eternity of high-elastic tension.

"You okay Philipia?" China worriedly ask which I responded with a nod.

My friends all gathered up around me trying to make sense of what just happened and why Pangaea decided to take him in, knowing what he did in the past.

Mondays, am I right?

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11 : 05 am (Lunch break)

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Brunei dropped his spoon when he heard about the news, I guess professor Reich doesn't teach in his room "What?! That... That man?!" He exclaimed, looking surprised and panicked.

I can't blame him, everyone knew what he did and the bloodshed that was spilled, it's like you're walking around in school with a possible murderer on the loose.

I nodded at his surprised action, good thing Israel and Germany

aren't here yet, we always eat behind the west building where not many students come and it's near the school garden and vending machine. A perfect place for lunch, but it's also far from where my classroom is.

"This is bad." he massaged his temples. I watch Brunei stressing as we're both worried for the others sake that crossed paths with him.

"I'm worried about you." he said, grasping my hand and pressing his forehead against it. I'm happy he's worried for Israel's and my sake, it shows how much of a good friend he is.

I just hope they won't meet, although I doubt if they would, the school had many floors and rooms, you'd get yourself easily lost. Then again, it's a small world.

"You guys waited long?" Malaysia and Indonesia arrived carrying their own lunchbox.

Brunei whip his head back at them, "Nah, you're just in time" he released my hand and look over behind them "Where's Germany and Israel?"

Indonesia and Malaysia sat down and leaned close, "they were talking to Germany's pops."

Oh, I guess they met sooner than I expected.

"You mean with Israel?!" Brunei exclaimed.

Indonesia nodded with a serious look. "Apparently Third Reich will be teaching here, *temporarily*. But if the students like him and his way of teaching, he can stay permanently"

I see, that's why he was trying to be close to us. But why would he want to teach here permanently? If he doesn't want to he can just decline and make the students that already hate him, hate him even more.

Maybe he really does want to change and this is his first step. Or he has something else in mind?

Malaysia opens his lunchbox "Rumor is spreading like wildfire of his arrival and he specifically chose 3 - P."

I jolted and look down on my lunch.

Indonesia and Malaysia turn to me "That's your room right? 3-P 402?" Indonesia asked.

I nodded, Unfortunately enough...

"Yikes, how was it?" Malaysia hissed, feeling sorry for me.

I bit my lower lip, "it was like having a snake coil around your neck."

"Thought so" Indonesia responded "Israel was pale when we saw him and Germany was oblivious!"

"Who's oblivious?"

"Of course it was germa-- ah!" Indonesia jumped when Germany and Israel were behind them

"I'm not oblivious, I know what's going on" he sternly said with arms crossed. Israel sighed and flops down besides me, laying his head on my left shoulder. Looking at him closely, he's trembling...

"Oh! So you know?" Brunei raised a brow.

"Yes" his glasses glints "he's testing my loyalty."

The place grew quiet and leaves danced around us.

"Welp, he's an idiot" Malaysia commented and begun eating his food.

Germany sat down between them with crossed legs, "I am not an idiot!"

Brunei sighed and shake his head, "you seriously just don't know what's going on, your father is feared by many people. Of course it would be awkward for them"

Germany tilts his head, "he's feared? Weird, that's not what I see"

Brunei raised his hands in defeat "I give up, I don't wanna talk about it, I'm sure we don't want to talk about it so let's just eat."

"Agree" Israel answered and tries to open his lunchbox with no strength whatsoever.

I chuckled and helped him open it which he smiled at me "Thanks...angel."

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11 : 50 am (Back west building)

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We stayed there for a couple of minutes after eating. Brunei and Israel were on the grass taking a nap, Malaysia and Indonesia were playing with their phone and Germany was reading a book across me.

I look around more and this place is really my favorite, since the school garden is here, it's windy and relaxing. It's quiet too, sure you can hear some students from afar but, it slowly fades away and return to peace and quiet again.

I stare at Germany who's indulge with his reading caught me staring, and for a second we had a staring contest.

Examining him closely, I can see similarities of professor Reich of him when they both wear glasses. Sharp eyes that is observant and fast, a gaze that can piece you through like a sword and the color that just monopolize you on the spot.

Germany slowly turned red, blinking multiple times as if asking himself '*why*'

He looked confused and holding his chest, is he having chest burns?

"Are you okay Germany?" I asked.

He shake his head and faced me with a flushed face, an expression I rarely see him make, in fact. I've never seen him make this face at all.

"My heart is beating really fast and my mind is so full of you is what's happening." He said, barely a whisper.

Beating really fast? Germany was breathing really heavily and looking away, "Should I get you something to drink? To cool you down a bit?"

He flinched and tried to process what I said, "You're gonna get me something? The goddess is asking if I want something to drink?!" He gasped to himself.

Oh dear, is it much worse? He's gasping!

I quickly stood up "I'll get you something, wait here."

"Is it perhaps the essence of eternal youth?" He muttered, deep in his thoughts.

"What's happening?" Malaysia asked.

"I think Germany is sick, he said his heart is beating really fast" I replied.

Indonesia raised a brow as he stares at Germany who's still muttering something under his breath, "What did you do to make him swoon like mad?"

Swoon like mad? What's that?

"I only stared at him." I responded.

Malaysia laughed, "Oh dear, you know your gaze can be deadly philipia, geezzz." he stood up and approached Germany who's still in shock about something.

"There, there Germany, it's normal" Indonesia pats his back, calming Germany who almost looked like he's hyperventilating.

"I should really get him something to drink"

Indonesia nodded and I hurriedly ran to the vending machine that's not far from ours.

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I hurriedly walked towards the vending machine not far from our position, and at the distant I saw someone bending down to get their drink.

Hands with red gloves and eyes cold as ice.

"Good afternoon Singapore." I greeted and he immediately made a space between us, specifically three steps apart.

He fixed his glasses that glinted. "Good afternoon" he greeted back before taking out a wet wipes from his pocket and begun cleaning the cold and wet soda can.

Ah right, he has fear of germs, although it isn't worse since he can still drink from the vending machine and eat at the cafeteria.

I smiled and takes some coins before inserting it in the machine, I should get myself one as well while I'm at it.

Germany likes banana flavor, so I'll get him a banana juice while I'll get mango.

Strawberry...

I halted and smiled at myself; I can hear red's voice. I sigh and just gave in, I roam my finger down to press the button of the

strawberry soda that he loves so much.

"You switched from mango to strawberry in 0.5 seconds as if someone told you so" I almost jumped a little from Singapores' sudden banter.

I picked up the drinks and faced him "Well, let's just say we're somewhat similar when it comes to mental topic." I tap my forehead as I speak.

He tilts his head "You have germaphobia as well? I did not expect that." he responded while gulping down his drink: Raspberry soda.

I grinned "Not really, mine isn't a fear or anything, just shattered personalities." I muttered the end.

"Shattered personalities? What a weird phrase." He said and turn to his heel before stopping "I-if it's not so much of a trouble, you can ask me for guidance when it comes to those. B-but it's not like I care just... concerned, wait that's the same... Argh!" He turn to me again and points at me. "J-just advice!"

Today really is fever day, he's also really red, he's huffing too. "O-okay" I replied while he walks away still facing me before spinning around halfway and ran.

"That was weird." I said.

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I got back and Germany was still in the same state, but Israel and Brunei already woke up.

"Here, Germany" I gave him the banana flavor and he hesitantly takes it.

His eyes shine and locked on mine, as if he accepted a blessing. "Amen" he said and didn't even think twice to open it like plucking a leaf before gulping it all down.

"Tch, just because you got a drink from Philipia, doesn't mean you have to brag about it!" Brunei smacks the back of Germany's head causing him to cough and choke a little from his drink.

"You imbecile! I almost spilled the drink the goddess gave me!" I can see veins popping from Germany's forehead.

I sigh and took my lunch box from the grass before glancing on Israel who's still quiet and trembling.

"Shall we head back?" I said and they all nodded.

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Walking at the outside corridor, Brunei and Germany had to go at the east wing towards their respected room while Israel will take a shortcut at the west wing. Wanting to avoid professor Reich who's faculty is located at the North building.

"You okay Israel?" I asked.

Malaysia pats his back, "it's okay bud."

Israel sighed and nodded "Why of all people..."

"Was there a past between you and him?" Indonesia wondered.

Me and Israel jolted, I forgot they're memories are erased as well. I really have to watch out to the people whose memories are erased; no wonder Germany has no idea.

His memories are erased too.

Israel shake his head, "That guy just, terrifies me for some reason."

Malaysia and Indonesia seemed convinced enough since they didn't asks for more. I mean, he does terrify Israel but, I don't think *terrify* is enough from what he did, he is scarred for life.

"I did see him, he is terrifying, the way he looks at people is very...."

Malaysia's sentence fades as his eyes are fixated on someone who's walking towards us in the hallway.

Red, white and black.

Israel's face turned pale and I swear. I can hear his heartbeat, it's thumping and beating like huge drums.

"Oh? What a coincidence to see you four here." His voice creeps on our skin like electric wire and pierces the inside "You two must be Malaysia and Indonesia." He narrows his eyes on them.

Malaysia gulped and Indonesia nodded, unfazed. Good, at least Indonesia isn't scared of him... Right?

Professors eyes slowly landed on Israel who's head lay low "Is that how you greet a teacher? Israel?"

I saw Israel's eyes widen and his hand clenching on the end of the hem of his shirt. I bit my lower lip and step in front of him, covering Israel from professor Reich.

"Pardon us, professor, Israel isn't feeling well and as a teacher you should have more understanding and compassion towards your students, even miss Permian can do it in a heartbeat." I said, heart nervously beating, it feels like every words I said was an insult and the ground beneath me would crumble and swallow me for my insolence.

His lips slowly formed into a smirk "I guess I really have a long way to be a teacher." he said.

I held Israel's hand the whole time even as he walks away from the opposite direction.

I released a long breath as if I was holding them in.

"He really is creepy" Indonesia commented, but I immediately turn to Israel who's still frozen at his position.

I placed both hands on his shoulders and leaned close "It's okay, I'm here... I'm here." I whispered again and again until I felt his shoulders soften.

Israel sighed and softly removed my hand from his shoulders "Thanks, angel... I appreciate it, I think I want to go back to my room first, tell the teacher for me."

Malaysia salutes, "We got it covered, go home and rest for a while we'll take the bags for you."

Malaysia and Indonesia walks Israel to his classroom to take his bag and go back to the dorm first. Poor Israel, who's knows what he's been through, now that professor Reich is here, it's gonna be hard to move freely.

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12 : 24 pm (Central: school garden)

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I sat on the fountain while reading a pocket book, waiting for the bell to ring for our next class. Reading at the school garden really gives me peace of mind, there aren't a lot of students who stay here which is weird, but I'm not complaining, it's quiet.

As I flip to the next page, a shadow looms over me; looking up to the person who stands before me, I squinted my eyes a little from the blinding light behind them.

"Amor, still beautiful as always." Mexico kissed my cheek which I also returned. He sat besides me and I noticed he's carrying a guitar.

It was such a long time but I can still remember when me and Mexico first met for the arranged marriage that Pangaea made, Mexico was hostile towards me at first-- I can't blame him, after all; the war in his country just ended, same as mine...

But one day when I was trying to get close to him, I played him a song since he seems fond of music and it calms him down.

And we did get close that day, although for some reason, the marriage was cut off and we remained friends instead.

Mexico seemed to have caught me staring at his guitar, he grinned and positioned himself.

"Any request?" He asked.

I giggled "You can decided."

Mexico pats my head "Anything for my amor."

Mexico begun playing a piece I don't know, but it was somewhat warm and relaxing.

https://youtu.be/8cX_OJPq6Sw

[I love you too much: book of life]

I closed my eyes while he plays the song.

The warm breeze.

The sound of soft waters from the fountain.

The chirping of birds.

Distant conversations.

This is peace, this is tranquility, this is serenity.

Just the world with no problem and pain. It would be such a wonderful fantasy one could wish.

As the song ended, Mexico added a few more notes before finishing it. I clapped eagerly as Mexico pretended to bow to non-existent audience except me.

"That was amazing." I praised and he blushed.

Mexico rubbed the back of his nape and grinned "it's a song for the person I really..." He hides in his arm "...really love."

I've never heard Mexico confess that he likes someone, I wonder who? She must be a lucky girl to have Mexico love her this much.

"I'm sure she will love it." I clasps my hands together.

Mexico glance at me, face still flushed red "D-did you love it?" He stuttered.

How cute his expression is right now "I really, really loved it."

Mexico beamed "That's great! Then there's nothing for me to worry about!"

Me and Mexico talked for a while before Canada and France came up behind us "Mapleeeeeeeeee!!!!!!!!! Ssyyyrruuuppppp!!!!!!!!" Canada yelled while sprinting towards me.

"Hello Cana-- oompft!" Before I could greet him, he gave me a huge hug and nuzzles his face on my left shoulder. "My Maple Syrup that I love oh so much!!" He squealed.

I giggled at how friendly he is on Monday "I love you too Canada." I replied which took him aback and pulls himself from me, holding both my shoulders firmly while his eyes glitter.

"R-really?! You really love me?!"

I smiled "Of course, you're a good friend."

I felt Canada froze on his position between me and Mexico-- who was grinning. Strangely enough; Canada kept smiling but his eyes were hollow and faced France "-she loves me she said... I'm a good f-friend she said..."

France chuckled and knelt before me. "Good afternoon Philipia."

"Hey, your nephew is dying here, I'm stabbed by invisible swords you know..." Canada muttered will lightly kicking France on the side.

"Oh calm down Canada, I'm sure Philipia meant it."

"Gah! Stop! It's painful!" Canada cried while clenching his chest.

Did I say something wrong? I did mean it, Canada is a good friend.

"Philis!!!" I jolted again before turning around.

"What now? It was just so peaceful earlier." Mexico groans following where the source of the sound was.

At the distant, Ukraine was waving at us carrying a crate with flowers in it, he ran towards us and catches his breath when he arrives.

"I thought I killed you last night." Canada confusingly said.

That was concerning.

Ukraine turns to him with a sour look "I survived you idiot, how dare you put worms in my bed."

Canada whistles nonchalantly "Oh you know, *pranks.*"

Ukraine rolled his eyes "Oh yeah, pranks, why don't I destroy that stupid album of yours?!"

Canada stood up, both hands forming a fist "I'll break your jar!"

Ukraine gasped "How dare you!"

"Amigos, please. Amor came here to have peace and quiet, go fight somewhere else."

I smiled and shake my head, "it's okay, I don't mind."

Ukraine softened his expression and showed me his crate with

flowers "I joined a gardening club today philis, wanna join?"

I beamed and smiled "There's a gardening club?"

Ukraine nodded "Sure do, I just found it out yesterday! And now I'm tending these tonight and I'll plant lavenders later after school." he explained and I couldn't help but nod multiple times.

I didn't know there's a gardening club here.

"Have you heard about the new teachers?" France asked as he sat besides Mexico while Ukraine went to the flower area not far from the fountain to replant the flowers.

As France, Canada and Mexico talk about professor Reich, I followed Ukraine and helped him replant. But their conversation can still be heard.

"Yeah, I heard, apparently he specifically chose amor's class for some unknown reason." Mexico replied.

Canada sighed "Must be hard for her."

I soften my eyes as I dug a moderate size of a hole, removing pebbles and worms.

"You okay?" Ukraine whispered besides me, eyes still glued to digging.

I nodded "Yes."

Ukraine turn to me and smiled "Later after school, meet me here and help me replant some lavenders, we own the school's garden now." he mischievously grinned.

"Thanks." I beamed at him.

"I'll help you join in, there's not much members though, there's only three of us; one of them is tending the flowers and plants at the rooftop, seventh and fifth floor, while the other tends the fourth and first floors and I tend the outside plants, mainly the central schools garden, the garden at the west wing and the plants at the

outside corridor leading to the dorms." he explained.

"Then if I join, where would I be assigned?"

Ukraine thinks for a second "You can tend the east, and north gardens, they are smaller than these one but! I do hear the sunflowers at the north Wing garden needs attention."

"Okay!" I smiled and placed the new flower at the hole I just dug.

As soon as me and Ukraine finished replanting, the rest of my friends all headed back to their respective rooms while Ukraine still have to return the equipment at the club.

I washed my hands at the restroom where only I use. Even though it's a male academy with males only, they still placed female restrooms since there were female country leaders that once attended here.

As I dry my hands with my handkerchief "Sunshine." A deep voice boomed out.

I stop and turn to my heel where Russia was walking towards me "Hello Russia, good afternoon."

"You seemed busy even though class will resume a few more minutes"

I smiled "I helped Ukraine replant flowers" I replied.

Russia seems relaxed as we both walk in the hallway where only a few students are left, the others are probably in their room now; waiting for the next class.

"I don't think I need to ask." He said.

I soften my eyes and nodded; it's about professor Reich.

"I'm sure Germany doesn't have a single fucking clue" Russia scowled.

I bit my lower lip and nodded again "it's not his fault..."

I hear him scoff "Yeah right, but it's still a mystery why this damn school allowed it."

Yeah, I wonder why they allowed it? I'm sure Tethys knows but why didn't he stop it?

"Why didn't Masky stop it?" He wondered the same thing I did.

There has to be a reason...

"Tethys still isn't the seated to be the one in control of everything yet." I responded.

Russia sighed. The hallway has gone quiet now, the windows seemed to shake and our steps seems to echo. The more we talk about it, the more I think about all the intricate web of intrigue before me, I want to stop for a while.

"I guess you're right... Not even *he* was stopped to attend here." I paused my tracks and turn to Russia, his tall height makes me look up, it makes it look like I can't reach him at all...

"Who's *he?*" A heavy thump startled me.

The same bad feeling I felt before professor Reich introduced himself.

"Tsk, I told you to stay away from us." Russia glared, his tone was bitter and foul.

The man before us chuckled in delight, he spreads his arms and smiled a menacing one.

"Hello, there *little Perla.*"

Thump.

Thump...

My heart was slowly beating, synchronizing with his steps getting closer...

And closer...

And closer...

My eyes are glued to his bright brown orbs.

"Dad, please." Russia steps in front of me. I look down to my feet and took a deep, deep, deep breath.

"Hello, professor USSR." I greeted, stepping out of Russia's side.

He smiled and leaned down to my height "Respectful, I like that."

I forced a smile "I will respect you sir, if you refrain from calling me *little Perla* then maybe I would continue respecting you."

The first time I met him was when they visited our country, second was at the parent and guardian, this is our third day meeting. He smiled again, satisfied with my answer as he leans away and turn to Russia. His eyes looming down at him.

What is this situation? This is taking a toll on me. Today has been a lot, I want to rest.

I jumped a little when the bell finally rang. I tug on Russia's sleeves and he faced me, his sour expression turned soft.

"Yeah, you can go on ahead, sunshine." he kissed my forehead and lightly pushed me away from this tense father and son meeting.

I nodded and ran up to my room where everyone is already seated, getting away from the two nukes confronting each other.

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3 : 25 pm (After school)

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I sat on the fountain while waiting for Ukraine, watching my feet swaying left and right trying to ease the boredom. I told Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei to go home without me, but Brunei and Germany stayed for their club activities.

I've always wondered what it was but they won't tell me. Ahh, never mind it, I won't pry.

"Lookie here mate, we found a flower in full bloom, what up Philipia?" I turn around to see Australia and NZ walking in the outside corridor.

"Why, hello there gentlemen." I greeted with a grin.

Australia acted like an arrow stabbed his heart, pretending to be dying "Ahh, she called me a gentleman."

NZ scoffed and rolled his eyes, "Ugh, dream on animal lover." he walks over to me "What are you doing here all by yourself?"

"I'm waiting for Ukraine, wanting to join a club" I replied with anticipation.

"Oh? What club?" Australia asked.

We heard a rustle behind us "Gardening club! I got you a form to sign philis! They said you can start tomorrow."

I stood up and take the form "Thank you so much Ukraine." I smiled.

Ukraine puffs out his chest "Of course, I know you'll like it!"

NZ and Ukraine then begun bickering about the club form.

Does NZ want to join as well? He seems angry he didn't receive a form.

While they bicker and Australia is making it worse, I turn to the east building through the window, where I saw two people walking. They were wearing casual clothes and carrying heavy looking bags.

Ahh, the new batch of students.

"That's Finland and Estonia." Australia whispered besides me.

"I heard of them, but I haven't seen them personally." I said. Finland was asking a random student and the student pointed them the direction of the dorms, it's obvious they got lost.

I almost got lost in this school too, it's rather too big.

When they walked at the outside corridor leading to the dorms. I noticed Estonia was walking with a stick, "Ahh that's right, Estonia is blind." Australia said to himself.

I watch them walk towards the dorm before disappearing.

I sigh and turn to NZ and Ukraine still arguing. I stood up and placed the form in my bag "I'll pass this tomorrow Ukraine, thank you so much again"

Ukraine immediately turn his head to me, ignoring NZ "Of course! Anything for you Philis! Sorry I can't walk back home with you at the dorm, still got stuff to do."

I waved at Ukraine before walking back home with Australia and NZ. On the way back, there were multiple moving trucks and boxes in front of the dorm building we were in "Whoah, new students." NZ commented.

"We saw Finland and Estonia, maybe they're inside now." Australia responded. We walk closer and noticed one of the boxes were familiar flags, stamped on it "Oof, looks like Egypt, Norway and Brazil are now here." he added, taking a closer look at the boxes.

"Yikes, more trouble." We turn to Arabia who got out of the building now wearing comfortable clothes "Hello Philipia, nice to see you here." He greeted and I smiled "There's the smile that can wash away troubles."

"Hehe~ thank you Arabia"

NZ scoffs stepping infront of me "Sweet talking won't make her

swoon, don't you have a girlfriend already?"

Arabi chuckled "Easy now, I'm harmless" he raised both hands "I came down here to see Brazil and Norway, they're both playing at the gym."

With those words, NZ and Australia perked "Gym? Sports?"

Arabia winks "Yeah, wanna join?"

"Heck yeah! We'll go now!" Australia removed his vest and necktie, NZ did the same and the three of them waved at me as they ran to the gym with the new students waiting for them.

I pressed the elevator and glanced at the small monitor showing me that the elevator is coming down from the 6th floor.

"Hello."

"Hello, Cosmos" Cosmos remodeled his space helmet so that people can now hear him even without the earpiece. He got tired giving it to people so that they can hear him, for one day he spends 34 earpiece at least.

I'd do the same if I were him, although we all know he isn't a country leader but a world leader or some may like to call it, a planet master.

The elevator arrives and it made a small sound, indicating it's going to open and when it did, three students came out all wearing casual clothes; I've never seen them, are they also the new students?

I can recognize these people: Nepal, Iceland and Greece. As they walk pass us; me and Greece caught each other's gaze before he glares at me.

I blinked a few times following their backs as they leave the building still talking, Greece smells like Athena. Athena has this earthy yet watery smell to her, maybe I'm just imagining things.

I hopped on to the elevator with cosmos before he pressed his floor and I pressed mine.

"Shooting star, I have a favor." Cosmos spoke through the confined space of the elevator.

"Yes?" I asked.

"Iran always say that you have this minty smell, but I don't know what a 'minty smell' is like" he said before turning to me "So can I smell you? But you have to close your eyes, I don't want anyone to see me."

Ahh, is it the Sampaguita? I mean, I can understand him since he's basically an alien for me considering he lived outer space.

I took the flower from my ear and gave it to him "No need, the smell came from this one. You can smell it in your room so you don't have to bother smelling me, I'm sure I smell sweaty now." I smiled.

He looks at the flower before taking it from my hand; and at that moment, the elevator door opens to his floor, "This is my stop, thank you shooting star."

I wonder why he calls me shooting star?

"No problem." I said.

Cosmos walks out of the elevator and stood there up until the door closed.

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When I arrived at the dorm, I closed the door behind me only to be greeted by silence. Everyone must be busy or they still haven't gone home, ah right. Israel is home, might as well check on him.

I walked over to his room that's besides mine and knocked on it

softly, "Israel?"

I pressed my ear on the door and I can hear rustling "Angel?..." His groggy voice tells me I just woke him up.

"Sorry, I didn't know you were asleep, I just wanted to check up on you." I said.

I heard a creak of his bed and soft steps coming towards the door, it softly opened and I'm greeted by a cold, dark room.

"What time is it?" He asked with half open lidded eyes, he's still wearing his uniform too.

"It's 3:45 pm." I answered.

"Oh, I see, sorry to make you worry angel. I wasn't feeling good."

I smiled and placed my hand on his forehead to check his temperature "You don't have a fever, that's a relief, should I make you something to eat?" I asked.

Israel stares at me for a minute before placing his head on my right shoulder "I'm scared...angel, I'm scared..."

I hush him down and hugged his tall form, patting and rubbing circles on his back and kept repeating comforting words to him.

"I wished they erased my memory, I wished they made me forget, but they didn't and now..." I pull him closer to me and he hugged me tighter in return "Angel, what if I have no one to turn to?"

"Israel." I called in a soft and low voice that only the two of us can hear "I'm here, remember? When you're in trouble I'm here, when you're sad I'm here... Don't ever think you're alone." I pulled him from me and cupped his face, I had to stand on my tip to reach his height but if it's to reach him I can take it.

His eyes glimmer from the tears that are about to fall, "Don't burden it all to yourself, I know how heavy and hard that feels."

He bites his lower lip, holding back a cry "It's okay, I'm here now,

no one can touch you or any of us anymore... I promise, so rest easy okay? Whatever happens I'm here to protect you, even if it means I'd do it again and again."

That was the final straw that Israel broke, he sobbed and hugged me the whole time he cried. I can feel his pain, all those years of torture and sadness he still carry them in.

But I'm here now, I won't let anything bad happens to him or to anyone of my friends.

"Thank you, angel..."

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5 : 34 pm

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Israel slept soundly after changing his clothes into something comfortable and eating soup; Zhug. I washed the dishes while glancing at the clock every now and then.

"They're late, maybe they really are super busy?" I asked myself after drying my hands and peeking out the window to see nothing but trees and the school ground.

This building is really high, is it safe when earthquakes come?

A knock interrupts me from my thought "Is it them?" I walk to the door and opened it, yet there was no one there except a small box with my name written above it.

I bend down to pick it up and shake it lightly, guessing it's content.

"Ahh! Don't close the door!" I halt and turn to the right where Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Germany are walking in the hall with mud all over them.

"What happened to you guys?" I asked and closed the door for them.

Germany was looking quite determined while the rest of them had a tired expression.

"It is done, the statue that I had asked for is done!" He clenched his fist, "We carried it. I asked with everyone's help but it rolled on the ground including us and we landed on the mud." he explained still with a stern look.

"The statue didn't even break" Brunei groaned and stretch his arms.

"Statue? What kind was it?" I asked.

"It was a golden statue and painted" Germany replied.

I laughed at their ridiculous appearance, "Oh my goodness, must've been fun"

Indonesia slumps his back "Yeah, *fun.* Rolling on the mud like an idiot," he sighs "I'm gonna take a shower."

"All of you need to take a shower, I already made dinner so you can just eat." I said.

Malaysia and Indonesia beamed before hurriedly running to their room, before Brunei and Germany followed.

As they all went to their room, I went to mine and opened the box. Taking a cutter, I slowly sliced the tape that seals it.

There was huge newspaper from different countries on top, I removed them one by one and there was something underneath it all. It was wrapped firmly with a bubble wrapper making it hard to see what it was.

Removing the tapes and unraveling it, it was a black box. A box inside a box, that's weird. It wasn't an ordinary one tho, it looked like some sort of a miniature drawer like I see in those vanity shops.

I was right, I opened the box and I can smell a rich aroma, it's like opening a tiny double door and the inside of it had real gold and

silver designs. Inside that black box, was a diamond shape box with a small note on top that says:

Hope you'll love my gift, Philia.

A smiled made its way to my lips before opening it, slowly and gently. A lullaby was playing and an expensive looking quill pen with real diamonds and rubies adorn the feather, in fact, I think the pen itself was made with diamond and rubies. There was also an expensive looking bottle of ink, it also had diamonds and instead of Ruby, it was a topaz gem adorned the cap of it.

I took the pen and there was another underneath it. It was fountain pens; two of which where carefully laid out besides each other. The one on the right was white while the other was black. There was also another note on top of them that says:

The white one is Aurora Diamante fountain pen and the black one is Fulgor nocturnus . I'm sure you'll love these Philia.

"Thank you, Tethys." I said to myself as I inhaled the scent that's coming from them.

I sighed and placed the pen back and returned it to its box before placing it on my study table where I can see them when I'll write.

Tethys has been gone for a few weeks now due to the upcoming years where he'll finally sit down as the new leader of the whole continent. He's been sending long text messages when he can sometimes and it all tells there what he did or what he's doing and how he feels and how much he misses me.

I'm sure Tethys misses the others too, he's really a good friend.

Cleaning up the box and newspapers, I got out of my room again and headed down to the first floor where I'll be getting the next letter from Athena.

Getting out of the building, I can feel the cold spring breeze hitting my bare skin. I shudder a little before standing underneath a tree not far from the building lights. I look up at the dark empty sky, no stars nor clouds.

"It's gonna ra--"

"It's gonna rain Estonia, hurry up." I jolted and hid behind the tree. I peeked a little to see Finland guiding Estonia towards the door while Estonia taps his walking stick.

"I can tell finland, geez" as soon as the both of them got in, I sighed and lean back on the trunk of the tree.

Waiting for a few more minutes, I hear a familiar coo of an owl. I got out of the shade of the tree and waved at Athena who's carrying a letter now.

"There we go, good girl." I said and rubs it's forehead. "Thank you."

Athena coos again and rest on my right shoulder as I walked back inside the building. I got inside the elevator when suddenly, a man immediately hops in while on his phone.

It's Egypt!

I sunk behind him, trying my best to avoid detection, good thing he's busy with someone on the phone.

"Ha! Mongrels! Who do they think they are? I'm finally at Pangaea! Cairo, you should really come here! It's amazing!" His voice is booming and loud.

I think he thinks he's the only one in here, but I won't talk. I turn to Athena who's now asleep on my shoulder, I smiled and taps it's forehead and I can smell the same scent from Greece.

Nahh, that can't be.

"Oh dear, don't they mean they want me back cause they miss how awesome I am? Ha! Such mongrels indeed, they need to kneel first!" I wonder who he's talking to.

The elevator door opens and he immediately got out, leaving me once again alone in the confined room. I sighed and waited for the elevator to drop me on my floor.

When I arrived back at the dorm, Israel was at the living room with Malaysia, playing a game with a console. I'm glad he's okay now "I was worried where you ran off to." Brunei said before glancing at the sleeping owl on my shoulder.

"I just had to take the letter." I smiled.

"Of course, there's warm milk if you like." He offered.

I shake my head and showed him the letter, "it's okay, thanks though. But I'm gonna hit the bed for today after reading this." I said.

Brunei nodded "Alright, goodnight."

"Goodnight Angel." I turn to Israel who finally smiled after a long day.

I smiled as well "Good night, Brunei, Israel and Malaysia."

Malaysia grins "Nightyyy.!"

I went to my room and locked the door behind me, Athena immediately flew to her bird stand and slept there after taking a little treat from the small bowl on top of the piano.

I sat on my study chair and read the letter.

Good evening or good afternoon, not knowing what time is there
I'm going to guess since we don't breath the same air
All I could do is sit here and stare
While thinking I'm lucky, I met someone like you who is rare

Wishing someday I'd see your face
Wishing someday I'd go to your place
Wishing someday I'd give you a warm embrace
Knowing you I think that won't be the case

You; a stranger who I don't know
Not really sure if you're a friend or a foe
But, talking to you makes the time go slow

Either you're a man or a woman I won't care
As long as you'd be fare on a deal that I'll share

I'll be waiting, fourth day of spring
If you agree just give me a ring

I'll place my number right down below
You don't know how much anticipation has overflowed

I'll be waiting, dear stranger oh friend of mine
As long as you're not a country leader that's fine

Then I'll be waiting for your next reply
Hope to see you then, bye~

I look over to Athena who's fast asleep, it's a good poem, although it still needs a little more work. I bring the letter close to me and inhaled the scent. There's no mistaken, it's really the same...

Does that mean, the person who I've been exchanging letter with; was actually Greece?

I sighed and slump back on my seat, no wonder it said 'As long as you're not a country leader that's fine.'

I forgot why.

Greece's mother was a female country leader that abused and mistreated him, fortunately she died and Greece has become hostile against female country leaders since then.

I know it because I stumbled upon it on the leaders site the other day, I was bored so I scrolled through the net and studied different people through it. Hoping I could get secret information or anything to give brother so it won't be too obvious I'm backing out.

What should I do? Should I pretend to be a commoner?

That can't be, he's already seen me and the way he glared at me was really cold.

I leaned back on my bed and decided to write back a reply

tomorrow. I need to recharge my energy first and it's still school week.

Oh yeah, we have an assignment to pass... Tomorrow huh? I'm going to meet professor Reich again. We all will... And I'm guessing professor USSR will be teaching in Russia's class instead.

I immediately knew he would be a teacher here because of the uniform.

I turned the lights off except the one at my night stand.

After brushing my teeth and setting the alarm, I lay on my bed and pulled the covers on top of me.

"Goodnight Athena." I muttered and she cooed.

I smiled and finally turned the lights off.

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[Location]: unknown [Time]: 08:28 am.

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One new voice message.

Message [1];

------- sphere.....----- go ------- too late -------.....
Take.....message....------ ph....a.....------- lie..... ---- take.....-----
too late....too late...! ------

End of voice message.

< < < End of Chapter 1 : Welcome Back to Pangaea.

> > > Coming Chapter 2 : Sky is Blue, sea is Red.

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[Heya guys, it's me your lovable author G.D. I hope ya'll enjoyed this 100k plus words π^π. It's a little gift and ya'll deserve it because ya'll were very patient]

[Also, the facts will come after five chapters ^^]

[And congrats again to the people who reached here and thank you so much for the amount of reads on book 1 π^π am so happehh!]

[You guys can tell that this chapter is a bit different cause yes, our editor D-kun is backk~~ thank goodness he's not dead ^^]

[Really hoped you enjoyed it and see ya on the next one~ but first, read the small note from D-kun himself ^^]

(Hello. It's me, D-kun. Sadly, I died. But fortunately, I live once again! *for now*)

[much love~]

Chapter 2 : Sky is Blue, Sea is Red

[image] [image]

[there'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Sorry it took so long, not feeling very well]

[Enjoy~]

_____

I glance at the window where hard droplets of the heavy rain would hit; it's so heavy it even feels like the ground was slowly giving up.

I sigh and turn back to my notebook where I wrote my notes and what was written on the board.

Yesterday, we still couldn't believe it, everything really did happen; Professor Reich and professor USSR came here to teach as substitute teachers. But there's no guarantee they wouldn't teach here permanently and that gave us all a shiver on the back.

I can't listen to the lecture, I can't understand what my teacher is saying; glancing at the board and to us as she properly explains our lesson.

She's doing her job and yet here I am thinking of something else - really, teachers patience are immeasurable, they deserve much more. I really salute all of them - of course that is if they act as real teachers and not abuse their power.

She closed her book and took a deep breath "alright, that's it for today's lesson, next week I'll expect that you'll do your essay and pass it to me" she added before packing up her things "see you tomorrow"

All of us bid her goodbye as she left the room and closed the door

behind her "it's break time" Joe said behind me while stretching his sore body.

"I'll be going to the club and replant the sunflowers" I spoke and stood up.

Joe tilts his head "really? Can I come?"

I nodded "of course, I don't mind a lending hand"

J and Spain decided to go to the cafeteria to have their break snacks while China pulled south out of the room and towards the student council to discuss about his late and absentees.

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([602] Gardening club)

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I went to the room with joe and searched for the materials I'll need for the replanting as well as the flowers I'll replant.

"Whoah, it's like the shed at my place where we place our gardening stuff" joe comments while examining the room; and it's true. It does look like the club room was a shed.

There's different shovels.

Sacks of fertilizers.

Different sizes of trowels for different purposes.

Garden gloves for all the members; leather and cut resistance.

Hand pruners and loopers.

Etc...

Basically all you need for gardening, they all have it that's provides by the school and of course, they are the most expensive and highest quality.

I even heard Tethys was the one who requested for us to have the highest quality. Some of these are even made of rare titanium and steel.

Tethys is a really good person. He cares for his schoolmates too, really - we don't deserve such a friend like him.

I took two pair gloves, the crate of the flowers and other necessary tools for replanting and digging by hand.

"Let me help you with that" joe offered and carried the crate like it was nothing.

I smiled and carried the tools instead "thank you Joe" I said and we both headed to the North Wing garden.

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(North Wing Garden)

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The north garden wasn't really populated by students, since this part of the building was mostly where the elite teachers faculty room are located and it's also where Mr. Pangaea's office is. Specifically, the 5th floor, and his window is perfectly seen even from all the way here at the garden; his window is black so we wouldn't know if Mr. Pangaea is watching or even at school.

Now that's scary.

"Where should I put this, Mahal?"

I flinched and turn to joe. He blinks to himself and furrowed his

eyebrows "damn it, why do I keep saying that word?!" He irritatingly said.

I laughed nervously and tried to shake the feeling off. I'm so conflicted if he knows or not or the effects are wearing off "I'm sure it's because you lack sleep?" I said trying to avoid talking about it... And it's better not to talk about it.

Luckily, Joe agreed "yeah, I guess you're right. I couldn't sleep much last night either after that surprise attack yesterday"

I tilt my head "you mean, about professor Reich's arrival?"

He nodded and placed the crate besides the empty spot of the flower bed at the left fence "yeah, that. Truly shocking" he replied.

I crouched down a little and begun digging on the ground while Joe did the same besides me.

Ahhh, this is nostalgic; didn't we used to do this before?

"So this is how you farm? Won't your backs hurt?" He asked with such worry and confusion.

I nodded and gave him one "I'll show you how we do it"

America looked hesitant but he still accepted it, "sooooo, should I remove my shoes and roll up my pants then go there with my feet soaked in that muddy watery ground?"

I nodded again and held out my hand "yep! So you wanna try?"

He laughed "no woman has ever held out their hands for me, it's always been me doing it, so I really can't say no to that" he accepted my offer and slowly placed his foot down, it sunk and I felt him shiver.

I giggled and placed my straw hat to him "here, so you won't get tired from the sun"

He grinned and placed his other foot before I let his hand go "so basically, you just have to like place it, like slapping a water" I explained and demonstrated it.

"That's a weird way of explaining, but I get it, I watch the others do it"

We didn't even realize the time we spent at the field with everyone, Joe got addicted to it and didn't even feel tired. When we got out of that muddy field, our feet were wrinkled by how long we soaked it.

I laughed at myself as I remembered.

Joe seems to notice it, "what's so funny?" He asked, a little curious as he leans a bit closer.

I shake my head and keep it to myself "it's nothing, just remembered... something" I muttered the end.

"Lucky you, you can still reminisce something in your past, while mine - I can't even recall it, it's weird"

Joe took one sunflower and plant it to the deep hole he dug, I soften my gaze at him, looking at him from the side, I can see how distant and sad his eyes are.

Joe always wears his sunglasses, that's why sometimes; I don't know what he's feeling...

"I'm sure, you'll recall it someday" I said and he turn to me but I immediately stood up to take one sunflower from the crate.

While I was picking it up, I hear a rustling from the right fence of the sunflowers; curious, I step closer and peeked behind the tall flowers and saw someone sleeping there on the empty flower bed where we'll also replant.

He was wearing some sort of blue winter bonete that I'm sure I've seen somewhereband a pocket book covering his face.

"Oh"

Joe came up behind me "what's wrong?"

I pointed the sleeping person "someone is sleeping, it just startled me a little"

He tilts his head, stepping closer and peeking to who it is "joe, I don't think it's good to disturb their sleep, let's leave him be"

Joe nodded and we get back to replanting.

Then out of nowhere, we heard someone yelling from afar "why do I hear boss music?" Joe wondered and we turn back to see Canada running on full spring while France chases behind him.

"Canada! Get back here!!" France yelled, almost wheezing.

"Maappppplleeee syruppp!!!!!" Canada yelled before tackling me to a tight hug that almost suffocated me while he spins.

"Big bro! Careful!" Joe worriedly exclaimed trying to get me down from Canada's tight embrace.

Canada ignored him and continued to nuzzle his face on my chest "ahhh, I can smell your scent even from afar!～" he squealed and I couldn't help but pat his head.

"G-good morning, Canada" I greeted while struggling to breath.

"Haaa... Haaa... C-canada... P-philipia.." We turn to France who's bent down a little, large beads of sweat falling from his forehead and catching his breath.

When he finally relaxed a little, he pulled me out of Canada and smacks his head "ow! What the heck!"

"I told you not to run!"

Canada pouts "but I smelled my maple syrup!"

France furrowed his eyebrows, "what? I didn't even smell anything! What are you? An animal?!"

Canada stomps his feet "yeah I am! I'm an animal when it comes to something I crave!"

Suddenly, France grabbed his chin and squeezed it together while popping a vein "okay, that pisses me off for some reason"

"Ow! ow! Leht guuu!!!" Canada struggles to break free.

While behind France, I glanced over to Joe who ignored his two relative and continued planting - I shouldn't slack off either, I'm glad Joe is here.

Running up to his side again, I placed the sunflower on the hole I dug "we still have a few more minutes before break ends" he said, trying to hurry yet consistent at the same time.

"Okay~ " I responded.

"Ah! You're replanting! Can I help?" Canada beams even if France is carrying him through his collar.

I smiled "of course! You can start by giving us the sunf--"

"Okay! I'll water the plants!" He said, cutting me off and hopped off of Frances grip and took the long water hose at the corner.

"I don't think you need t--"

Canada ran up to the right side of the fence adjusting the hose before spraying it all over the flowers.

Wait.

Wasn't there a guy sleeping there?

"Ahhhh!!!!! It's cold! What in the world?!" The person exclaimed causing Canada to stop.

Oh, isn't that...

"Why hello Finland, so you were actually here?" Canada didn't look surprised, in fact he doesn't seem bothered that he just sprayed water all over Finland.

Does that mean Canada and France is roomed with Finland? Because France doesn't seem surprised as well.

Finland rolled his eyes and dust himself before his eyes land on

mine, he narrowed his gaze that contain such distrust and disgust "what's a woman doing here?" He scowled.

Canada stood infront of him pointing the water spray like a gun "how dare you! Don't talk to my maple syrup like that!" He argued.

Finland stood there perplexed "maple syrup?"

"She's a country leader like us, so it's only natural she attends here" France replied, composing himself after arguing with Canada who - of course, ignored him.

"Hey, I'm done with the flowers now" I turn to joe who actually replanted the flowers really well, I can tell this isn't the first time he did this.

"Thank you Joe, I'm sorry I was slacking off" I crouched down to give the ground a good pat to keep the flower in place.

Joe shrugged and removed his gloves "it's fine, I actually enjoyed it" he smiled.

Finland scoffs "seriously? She's a country leader? Ugh, great, I thought coming here would help me avoid girls like her" he said.

Canada faced him again "don't you dare talk shit about my syrup! Or you'll be so sorry!" He points the water pray at him even more firmly.

"Talk shit? What do you mean?" He raised a brow.

"It's better if you just don't talk at all Finland, besides, leave philipia alone she didn't do anything to you - it was Canada" France stated and pointed canada who nods quite proudly.

"Yeah! It was me! And I'm not ashamed and I won't hesitate to do it again!"

Finland smirked and crossed his arms "I see what's happening, so she finally got you all wrapped up in her little fingers"

I tilt my head to the side "wrap in my fingers?" I stare at my hand

trying to understand what he meant; how can I wrap them?

I don't have a rope.

Finland scoffs again "trying to act innocent to get any man do your bidding won't affect me"

"Hey! That's mean! Take it back! My syrup is the kindest! She's a *maple syrup* okay?!" Canada exclaimed like he's trying to convince someone to play a game the other person doesn't even like.

Finland glares at me, making me flinch on my position and held my now worn off gloves; fiddling it as I try to avoid looking at him.

"All girls are the same, they're filled with filthy perfumes and disgusting make-up and they're nothing but controlling, manipulative *bitches*"

Canada snapped and released an ugly malice around him "how dare you... I can be nice if you're nice to me, and I can tolerate if you insult me..."

We all shiver on our position except France who looks like he's used to this, but he also wore a very angry and irritated look.

"But if you talk about her like that, I won't hesitate... to eliminate bastards like you..."

Canada reminds me of the time Mr. UK beat Joe, the same eyes that holds so much negative emotion, this is proof that they're father and sons.

"It's a fact, Canada" Finland stated " and it's nothing but the only fact"

Canada gripped on to the water spray and changed the setting into hard spray, "now you've done it!"

Canada points the spray at him and was about to press the button, but Finland had time to react and grab his wrist to spray it upwards, causing a little sprinkle of rain everywhere.

"Hey! Cut it off you two!" Joe yelled before turning to France who did nothing but watch "uncle, do something!"

France glance at him and smiles "this is the only time I'll agree with Canada, I don't think this man has learned his lesson and his position here" he said.

"Seriously?" Joe groans before hissing in pain, probably from a sudden headache.

"Are you okay?" I asked, rubbing circles on his back.

Joe nodded and reasured me "I'm okay, I think I really need sleep; cause I lack of it"

We both flinched when we heard the two country leaders growling and just shouting.

We look back at them fighting over the water pray that's still spraying upwards before Finland stumbled back causing him to fall but still holding Canada's wrist.

"Stop Struggling and drown!" Canada exclaimed through gritted teeth, trying to keep Finland pinned down with his knee.

Finland clicks his tongue before rolling to the left side making Canada roll as well while they are still spraying the water - before finland was finally on top, pinning Canada down with the hose still above his head.

Canada released the button as the spray was now facing us "ah! Not there on her! Damn it!!" Canada head butt Finland making him stumble back.

"Ah! Ow!" He groans holding the area where Canada hit him - when suddenly, Canada stood up and was about to use the whole hose itself to attack Finland with it!

But Finland was able to catch it and again - fighting over the water spray before it faced us once more and accidentally pressing the button.

"Ah! No!"

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Drenched.

That's what I am right now; drenched.

The water sprayed on me; shivering a little from the cold, I sneezed and they all snapped back from their frozen state.

Canada pushed Finland off of him and hurriedly came to my aid, panicking like a mother who witnessed their child falling and scraping their knee - reminds me of Brunei.

"Omgomgomgomgomgomg!!! Finland! This is all your fault!" He cried while pointing at Finland who's on the ground.

He rolled his eyes "it wasn't my fault, it's hers, she's stupid enough to just stay in place"

Canada gasped "excuse me?!" He swiftly turn to his uncle "France! Do something!"

France turn to Finland, glaring at him who also glares back "both of you are at fault here" he said with a strict voice.

"Let's get you change first, good thing it's only your top area that got wet" Joe suggested and I nodded.

Canada then raised his hand "I can help!"

Suddenly, France smacks the back of his head, "help my ass, look at the mess you made cause you were trying to *help*"

Joe groans loudly, having enough of the commotion "just shut up already!" He yelled.

Calming himself, he took a deep breath "okay, let's all calm down" he said before checking his watch "There's still a few minutes left before the next class resumes. Big bro you always take an extra t-shirt with you right?"

Canada tilts his head "I do?" He asked.

"Of course you do idiot, it's your habit!- Anyways! Philipia has to change and since it's your fault, take responsibility and run back to your room to take it"

"Oh! Okay! I will go now! But wait! where will she change? there are only a few female restrooms here, I know there's one at the west wing building and east wing building, but we don't have enough time"

"She can use the first floor restroom for male, uncle France and Finland will guard the door"

Finland gave him a stop sign "no way" he said "I'm going back to the classroom rather than guard a door to a woman" he protest.

"She wouldn't be in this situation if you didn't talk shit" Joe berated.

"That was a fact" he insisted.

I sighed "it's okay, I can just remove my vest and hopefully it'll dry, I'm not *that* wet anyways" I said trying to fix this messy situation.

"Nope! You have to change, of course it's gonna be my t-shirt, hehehehe... heheh" Canada insisted while huffing weirdly.

"Enough and just go you sick pervert, you're wasting time" France pulled Canada from the circle and pushed him towards the hallway where he immediately ran in full sprint, faster than he did earlier.

"I'll return these tools first don't worry, just go with France and... This guy right here; seriously what's his deal?" He muttered the last part.

I nodded and I followed France while Finland follows me, Joe then placed all the tools on the empty crate before walking back to the

clubroom all the way to the sixth floor.

I sigh and lay my head down, I've caused him trouble again...

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(First floor - male restroom [3])

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I removed my crop top vest and unbuttoned my shirt, flapping it to make it to dry faster.

I look around the restroom and it's the same us the females, but there are these toilets that makes usually use, I wonder how they do it?

I examined one of them and saw a blue coin like thing on them, what's this? A candy? It smells minty.

Whatever it is, it's better not to touch it and leave it be.

"Can I go now?" I hear Finland grumble, his tone impatient.

"No, and if you go you'll regret it, you don't want Canada nagging you till after school" France replied.

Finland groans and remained still.

Even from the inside, I can hear their muffled voice that I can still make out.

I've troubled Finland and France now, making them guard the door since I'm changing at the male restroom, but at the same time. I'm thankful. No one would want to see a naked woman.

I turn to the counter again and examine myself at the mirror, not much has changed. It's still me.

It didn't take long when I hear that running steps that's almost inhuman before stopping infront of the restroom "I got it! Here ya go maple syrup!"

"Who's there, just insert your hand and the shirt Canada, don't even think of entering" France warned and I hear Canada whine; I'm sorry Canada, do you perhaps want to use the restroom?

Canada opens the door slightly and inserted his arm with the t-shirt he brought "here!~"

"Thank you Canada" I said and take the t-shirt from him, my cold hand brushing lightly on his, making him shiver "oh, sorry, my hand is cold"

"N-no problem!" He replied before closing the door.

"Syrup said *thank you* to me! See said it France!" I hear him through the other side.

"Yeah, yeah whatever..."

I giggled and begun removing my shirt and hang them for a second on the counter before wearing the white t-shirt; the fabric was soft and I can tell it's not an ordinary fabric. As expected of a rich country like him.

All t-shirts I buy is those buy one take one on the night market.

Pulling the collar of the shirt, I inhaled the scent and it smells like Canada "it's nice" I muttered before taking my vest and shirt.

Fixing myself a little more, I knocked on the door before I hear France push himself from the other side of the door and opened it. He's guarding it by leaning on the door? What a gentleman he is.

"You done?" Finland said impatiently, arms crossed and feet tapping, I can also see the red bump on his forehead where Canada head butt him. Of course, Canada has one but it's covered perfectly with his fur hat.

"Hehehe m-maple syrup wearing my shirt... " Canada drools; does

he like the fabric like I do?

France looked disturbed and flicks his forehead "wake up, you pervert" he said.

Canada stomps his feet and faced France "This is a once in a lifetime for me! Leave me alone geez!" He whined while holding his forehead.

"Hey" I turn to Finland who's behind me.

"Yes?" I replied.

He points my shirt and I look down to it.

"My shirt?"

He rolled his eyes and taps his shoulder "your back, there's a word on your back" he smirked.

I tilt my head and I turn around for Canada and France to see "a word?"

France reads it out loud "sex is best when you watch pornhub..."

There was a second of silence before France grabbed Canada by the collar "Canada... I thought you threw all shirts about *that* site!" He furiously asked, a dark shadow looming over France.

"Eek! I'm sorry! I didn't know! I really thought it was just a plain white t-shirt!" Canada cried, reasoning with France who's really, really angry.

A pornhub? Why does that sound familiar?

"Nice, you got yourself a merch, it's a limited edition one too" Finland compliments with a smile.

That's cool, it's a limited edition!

"You okay now, maha- I mean, philipia" I turn to Joe and showed him my shirt.

"It's limited edition!" I happily said, showing off a little. I've never worn anything limited edition in my life!

Joe looks at me with the same disturbed face as France earlier "wtf big bro?"

Canada shakes his head frantically "it's not what it looks like! I swear! I really thought it's a plain white shirt!" He defend.

Yet the disturbed look on Joe's face still didn't go "change it! I'll lend you my vest instead" Joe suggested and was about to remove his vest.

When our school bell rang signifying that break hour is over "shit!" Canada exclaims.

"Looks like she'll have to wear it" Finland spoke.

Joe and I quickly ran to the east wing while France, Canada and Finland ran to theirs.

"Fucckkkkk!!!!! The next professor is that Reich one too! Damn it!!!!!" Joe yelled while we ran in the hallway and stairs.

"I'm sorry joe!!!" I yelled as well, feeling bad that I dragged joe in my mess.

"Heh! It's fine! This moment will just be added to our memories in this forsaken school!" He grinned.

Time was slow as I gaze at Joe, his optimistic side still hasn't left and it hurts me when he's trying to fill his jar of memory that was supposedly full - but was taken.

My heart aches but I can't show it to him, so I returned a wide grin as well as we run inside the hallway even though it's not allowed "yeah! You're right, let's make lots of memories!" I happily replied.

When we arrived to the east hall, we saw professor Reich just entered the room and closed the door behind him.

"Shit! How the hell is he that fast?!" Joe asked as we both catch our

breath not far from our room.

I held my now damped vest close to me "let's go joe!" I said determined as I hurriedly walk to our room.

"What? We're late!" He said.

I turn to him and nodded "we're *seconds* late" I stated.

Joe follows hesitantly behind me as I knocked on the door before I hear him say "enter"

We both shudder; looking at each other, I slowly twisted the knob open. We entered the room and all eyes were on us, but it's a relief some of them were just about to sit down as he was just about to start, it's always a good idea to do this.

"Nice t-shirt miss philipia" professor Reich said, now that was out of the blue? Does he want one too?

"uhm, thank you...?"

He chuckled and shake his head before facing the board and opened his notebook.

As I take a sit, I felt a tap behind me and Joe lends me J's jacket "even though you're the one wearing it, I'm still embarrassed for you"

I tilt my head to the side; confused on what he meant.

"uhm, thank you Joe" I glance over to J who gave me a wink which I copied - he suddenly froze and turned beat red before hiding his face on his desk.

What happened? Is his jacket somehow to fight the cold? I didn't know, I'll return it later after class.

I turn to professor reich who's now writing something on the board from his notebook that looks familiar though; isn't that miss permians notebook?

Ahh, I guess she lend it to him to continue where she left off.

Class resumed like normal and I was surprised how good at teaching he was, he explains things in more detail and even gives us interesting facts.

Miss permians subject is about politics, even though most of us are already in the political industry - as country leaders, this is elementary for us. But sometimes, it's still better to learn from an expert and someone who has more experienced with it.

For a person who did so much bad things in the past, he was teaching us how to be good at communicating with people, especially with *our* people.

I didn't even realize how indulged I was listening to him; unfortunately I enjoyed it, the whole time I enjoyed it...

"Now then, seems like everyone finally gets it, time for a short quiz" he smiled and everyone groans like their betting team on a soccer game just lost "don't worry, I just want to see if you were all really listening" he added as he flips pages on his notebook and erased the writings on the board.

Good thing I wrote all of it.

We all take each of our own yellow pad and wrote our name.

As it started, he begun reciting the questions and we have to identify each of it; luckily it was only 20 questions.

While listening to him and writing the answer, I suddenly - faintly felt my marks showing and glowing, the jacket was helping it cover but it was somehow weird.

My body was reacting to something and I felt an intense pressure between my thighs.

I hugged heavily and tried to focus on answering, but his voice was fading in the background and my vision was starting to blur. Like I'm under an effect of something heavy and hot...

I jumped from my seat as professors ruler lightly slapped the corner of my table, I look up to him and I saw a faint glow in his eyes before disappearing and the marks also faddd from my body.

He smirked "are you okay miss philipia? Your face is red" lightly placing the back of his hand on my forehead.

The touch sent a shiver, it wasn't a scary shiver, more like *I was asking for more.*

"It's probably because she was drenched earlier while replanting, it's for her club..." Joe explained behind me, I realized I was almost leaning in to his touch so I immediately pulled myself back.

What's happening to my body?

"I see, that explains it, hang in there miss philipia, there's only one last question left" he said and stood infront of the class.

He recited the last question and I was able to answer it even though my vision as still a bit blurry.

We all passed out papers to him before he stacked it up "tomorrow I'll show all your results" he said before his eyes land on me.

I shrink in my position "- and miss philipia, better have your temperature checked in the infirmary, I suspect you have a bit of a fever" he added before taking his things and headed to the door.

I sighed and leaned back on my chair. What was I doing? Why did I suddenly felt weird? I've never experienced this, what's happening?,

"You okay maha- damn it. Sorry, I just can't help but blurt out that word when I talk to you"

I glance back to Joe, already used to this sudden word that he can't help but say "it's okay joe" I smiled and pats him.

His cheeks slowly goes flushed red before looking away "y-yeah, that's good"

Spain approached me and so did J and China.

They asked what happened to my uniform and why we were late and why I'm wearing a t-shirt.

Joe properly explained them all that happened and I fill the part he wasn't there; of course I showed off my borrowers shirt that's limited edition!

And the reaction they had was the same as Joe and France.

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3 : 25 pm (after school)

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As school ended, China immediately went to his secretary duties, Spain went to his club (soccer) , J went out of school with South to visit the new cafe that was the talk of the city; although I haven't really heard of it.

"Whew, that's it" Joe wipes his sweat as we finished replanting all the sunflowers.

I gave him a towel "thanks for your help today joe" I smiled and thanked.

Joe accepts the towel and smiles back at me "no problem, for some reason I kinda enjoy it, it's refreshing to see what you worked hard to be so beautiful" he said and wraps the towel around his neck "I might join this club" he glance at me with a knowing look.

I giggled and nodded "you're always welcome to join~" I replied and turn to the garden "Now the north Wing garden looks like a field of sunflowers, look at them dance with the breeze"

We both watch the flowers dance with the breeze.

It's warm.

It's cold.

It's peaceful.

Hope this peace doesn't end...

"Philis!!!"

Nevermind.

I turn back to see Ukraine running up to us while waving and behind him was Poland who's also running and following him.

"Philis! I heard you had a fever?!" He worriedly ask as he holds both my shoulders, shaking me back and forth "is it true?! Me and Poland heard it from some students passing by! Is it true?!"

"I uh.."

"If there's somewhere that hurts! Just tell me! I ditched Sweden so that I can help you with anything!" Poland exclaimed almost on the verge of crying.

I couldn't answer them, both have this very teary, wide eyes that if I try to tell them they'll cry sooner or later.

Such good friends they are.

"Hey! Poland! You left me! What the heck man?" Sweden then came up behind them, jogging towards us and stomping his feet at Poland who looks at him with a bored expression.

"But Philips had a fever" he replied.

Sweden then glance over to me and beams me a smile "good afternoon ladybug" he greeted and I smiled back.

"Good afternoon Sweden" I replied, still being held on both shoulders by Ukraine; who's eyes still firmly locked on to me.

"So? Is there any part of your body that hurts?!" He asked again making Poland look back to me as well.

I look over to Joe, asking for assistance telepathic. He seems to have get it and cleared his throat.

"Ukraine, philipia is okay now, soooo..." He looks down to Ukraine's hand "you can let go, I'm sure she feels uncomfortable, it was just a slight misunderstanding"

Ukraine sighs in relief "thank goodness, I was so worried"

"Thank the heavens, but still make sure to drink medicine okay?" Poland scolded and I nodded.

"it was just for a split second but I'll still take care of myself later when I get back to my dorm if that will make you guys feel better" I smiled.

Ukraine nodded "yes please, I'd hate to see you sick! Oh! Speaking of..."

Ukraine opens his bag and takes a new yellow t-shirt "Canada told me to give you a new shirt since the shirt you're wearing is...Well"

"Thank you Ukraine" I said and take the now new shirt that feels even more soft; softer than what I'm wearing.

"There's no logo or some shui on it right?" Joe takes the shirt from my hand and suspiciously examines it.

Ukraine shakes his head "god, no! I don't buy his merch even though he offered it to me many times before" he answered.

Joe still raised a brow but have the shirt to me.

Poland then skips towards my direction and lock his arms around mine "since you're going to change, we'll go with yo--"

"Stop that" Sweden flicks his forehead.

"Ow..."

"We'll guard the door for you instead" Sweden offered which I agreed.

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3 : 35 pm (First floor men restroom)

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Joe and Ukraine offered to take all the tools back at the clubroom while Poland and Sweden comes with me to guard the door of the restroom.

I removed the shirt I was wearing and wore the new one Ukraine gave me. I mean, I can't see the reason why I still have to change, it is *after school* already so I don't get the point.

I knocked on the door and they opened it for me, "thank you" I smiled.

Sweden pats my head "of course, a lady deserves at least something like this, even though it's inappropriate to change at the men's bathroom" he said.

"At least she changed safely, right?" Poland beams and placed his head on my right shoulder.

I giggled by how cute he is "of course, thank you both" I said and pats his head which he smiled even wider.

As we head back to the garden, poland halts and faced Sweden with a weird look "I think I left my phone in the room"

Sweden chuckled "well? What are you gonna do about it?"

Poland turn to me "I'll be right back! Wait for me here!" He exclaimed before running back to the stairs and back to his room.

Sweden laughed and I giggled, even if his height is average, he has some stamina in him.

"Let's wait for him here, he'll be fast" Sweden suggest.

I turn back to the small veranda of the hall that face directly at the sunflower garden "it's beautiful isn't it?" I said.

Sweden nods "it is, like you" he grins as he takes my hand and kissed the back of my hand.

I smiled and returned the kiss on the back of his hand too; this is such a weird yet unique greeting "same goes to you" I said.

Sweden stood there, shocked and a little taken aback before he broke down to a laughter while holding his stomach "ohhh man! I forgot that you're actually naive" he pats my head "but I loved what you did" he winked.

"Is it not supposed to be like that?" I asked; curious by how other people greet others.

Sweden thinks for a minute and leans on the veranda "hmmm, actually, nope. Usually males only do that and they do that in a way of like a respect" he explains.

"Oh I see, that's quite an interesting greeting"

Sweden grins "it is, I already forgot who invented that sly greeting. What about you?"

I tilt my head to the side "what's your type of greeting?" He asked.

My type of greeting? You mean beso?

"Show me" he steps closer, waiting for me to do something.

I nodded and gestures him to lean down a little because I can't reach his face with his height "my country's greeting is like this..." Pulling his face close, I kissed both of his cheeks "now you have to returned it to me" I said and faced my cheek to him.

Sweden looked a little baffled and hesitated but he still kissed both of my cheeks; well, more like a little lower on my cheek, almost kissing my neck and earlobe, when I step back he stood there with a

flushed face "t-thats a very intimate greeting" he said, covering his lower face with his forearm while looking away.

Was my country's greeting weird?

"I'm sorry, was it too much? I know it can invade personal space" I worriedly said.

Sweden shakes his head and took a deep breath while holding his chest "whoah, it's hot..." He fans himself still not looking over my way "I've done even way more than invading personal space - yet why?" He mutters to himself.

I wonder if the greeting was really weird, he's talking to himself. Like convincing himself of something...

Ah. His ears are red. He has fever too? That's understandable, it's still spring so the air is still a bit cold.

It doesn't seem like Sweden would talk to me now, he's avoiding my gaze and fanning himself, does his stomach hurt that he needs to go to the restroom?

But why is he fanning himself and face super red?

I peek over to the garden when I hear a soft metallic sound tapping the ground. It's Estonia, what is he doing here? Is he perhaps lost?

As he walks towards the opposite side, he suddenly trips and fall on the ground "ah!"

I flinched and hurriedly went to his aid "uhm, are you oka--"

"Estonia!" I stop and turn to Finland who's running to our direction "what the hell are you doing here?" He asked while helping Estonia up.

"I-I'm sorry Finland, I just wanted a walk, I felt the breeze here so I thought..." Estonia timidly replies while Finland dust his pants and shirt.

"I know that, but if you want to you can just tell me" Finland's voice

soften.

Estonia shrunk between his shoulders and look down, fiddling with his walking stick "I'm s-sorry..."

Finland sighs and shake his head "it's fine" he replied before noticing my presence not far from them. His soft expression immediately turned sour and glares at me as he held Estonia's hand and steps infront of him.

Like how brother Greg protected me from a wild dog before and he ended up getting bitten instead.

"You saw Estonia fall yet you didn't even do anything" he coldly said.

I look down "I was about to help him but Finland already got t-"

He gestures me to stop "whatever, just stay away from us or to Estonia, if I ever see you near him I'll tear that pretty little face of yours" he warned, which didn't really scare me but I should still listen to him.

"Y-yes" I replied before turning back to Estonia who's standing behind him.

"Come on" he said but Estonia kept his position, his body still facing me. For me, it feels like he can see me even with his eyes closed.

He walks closer which made Finland furrow his eyebrows "you" he points at me "your voice..." He spoke before letting go of Finland's hand and ran up to me, hugging me and nuzzling his face.

"It's really you! It's you!" He beamed as he now opens his eyes revealing a clouded yet bluish color.

"Uhm..."

I'm a bit confused, what is he doing?

"Don't you remember me? It's me Estonia! The one you saved!" He cups my cheeks "ahhh, it really is you! The shape of your face is the

same as ever! You never changed at all!" He added before hugging me while jumping in joy.

I stayed there, confused and surprised.

Who saved who? But, I've never personally met Estonia, I'm sure of it.

Finland pulls Estonia from me and glared at me "what the hell? Don't go hugging girls they're dirty! You'll get their strong, weird perfumes!" He scolds but Estonia struggles and still tries to hug me.

"What perfume?! That's her natural smell! Let me go!!" He insisted, tears forming on both corners of his eyes.

Finland clicks his tongue and harshly pulled Estonia away from me and held both his shoulders "you know that's impossible!"

Estonia shakes his head "it's her I tell you! The voice! The face shape! They're all the same! I can't be mistaken!"

"Damn it Estonia! Don't go around pointing random girls and say it's them!"

Estonia sobbed and pushed Finland away "it's her okay?!" He exclaimed which shocked Finland before turning back to me "Please, say my name again!" Estonia faced me with a desperate expression.

Should I? Finland is really scary right now, reminds me of a certain someone.

I took a deep breath and opened my mouth "Estonia..." I softly said.

His eyes soften and nodded, tears finally falling while Finland still looked angry, "it's impossible to be you" he growled.

"I'm sorry, but I'm really confused..." I said before I feel Sweden finally snapping back to reality; walk up behind me.

"It's none of your business, no matter how much I look at it, it's impossible to be you - tell me, what were you doing back in the

90's?"

Now that's more confusing why would he want to know? Also, he remembers his past which means his memories isn't erased.

"I was... In my country..." It's hard to explain for some reason but, I'm sure I never left my country, I could never leave my country.

He scoffs "thought so"

Estonia stomps his feet "No! It's you! I'm 100% sure it's you!" Estonia sobbed loudly.

"W-what happened?" Sweden spoke behind me which I shrugged.

Finland sighs and takes Estonia's hand "come on, just give it up"

Estonia yanks his hand "don't touch me... If you aren't giving up looking for your one true love who's also probably dead!"

Finland flinched and faced Estonia, holding back himself as he clenches on his shirt "don't go there Estonia"

"You went to mine! Saying she's not her when all I ever relied on my whole life was my hearing and sense of touch! So I can't be mistaken... " Estonia once again faced me.

Tears streaming down his face, not bothering to wipe them off "let's just go" Finland grabs his arm and just pulls him away from us.

"Ili-ili...."

My eyes widen as Estonia sang that first part, Finland stops; not looking at our way and hands firmly grasping on Estonia's forearm.

"Tulog anay... " He continued.

While we stand there, Poland and the others finally came back "philis! Did you wait long? Oh? What happened here?" Ukraine stood besides me, examining the situation.

Finand glance at us one last time before finally pulling Estonia

away yet his eyes is somehow still locked on to mine.

How does he know that song? How did he know that song? Nobody knows that except my people, unless they searched about it but what reason if he did?

Unless, I really did meet him before I just don't remember?

"What happened?" Joe asked, placing a hand on my shoulder causing me to jump a little from the sudden touch.

I faced them and held the t-shirt Canada gave me closer to my chest, wanting comfort from everything.

"I don't know, Estonia must've mistook me for someone... He said I saved him before..." I explained, my sentence fades as a gust of wind passed by; the sunflowers dancing around us and the beating of my heart slow and loud.

They must've noticed my worried expression "it's okay philis, I'm sure there's a misunderstanding" Ukraine comforts as he pats my head.

"Y-yeah! You know Estonia, he's new here" Poland added as he approached me with a smile.

"Seriously, fill me the gaps, what really happened?" Joe wonders as he turn to Sweden.

Sweden shrugs "I also don't know what happened, I didn't even know ladybug ran to the garden"

Poland raised a brow as he glance up to Sweden "I thought you two were together, where were you not to know she went to the garden?"

Sweden puffs both his cheeks, staring at Poland who's giving him a suspicious eye.

Ahh, maybe the beso was so embarrassed for him, as I thought. He thinks it's weird...

"Sweden went to the restroom, so he didn't know" I answered which satisfied Poland.

Sweden looks at me; cheeks still flushed red.

"let's just go, the sun is setting" Joe suggests and we all agreed as we make our way back to the dorms.

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(Room 3)

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I fllp down on my bed and stare at the ceiling; today, once again, is an exhausting day. So many things happened, including what Estonia said. I couldn't get it off my mind, it's bugging me, it's like telling me that I'm *definitely* forgetting something.

"But my whole life, I never left my country..." I muttered to myself as I covered my eyes with my hand.

The first time I ever left the country was the first announcement of the; *meeting of the world.*

The second was when I arrived here in pangaea and that was it. So I'm sure I've never, ever once went to Estonia's country.

He definitely mistook me for someone, yet. It doesn't explain why he knows that song, that melody.

I sighed and switched position as I took one pillow and placed it between my legs and took another pillow to hug it; now I'm comfortable.

I wonder when the others will come back, they sure are busy. Much like the time when joe and the others were still my dorm mates.

But it doesn't bother me anymore, I just want peace. Yes; peace, it's the best.

No trouble, not worries, just pure serenity...

"Hello?"

I opened my eyes and forced my comfortable body from my position to sit up and walk out of my room to the front door. "Who is it?" I called.

"It's me, Egypt, mongrel would it be so nice if you open the door?"

I tilt my head as I approached the door and removed the lock before twisting the doorknob and open it.

"Is there some-- oomp!" Out of the blue, I was greeted by a tight hug.

"Now, now Estonia, calm down" Egypt pats his back but Estonia kept his firm, "I apologize, miss?.." he gestures me to say my name.

"Oh, uhm, philipia, nice to meet you" I offered a handshake which he accept.

"So you're philipia, your name is beautiful..." Estonia muttered but enough for us to hear.

Egypt chuckled, placing his hands on both hips "I was wondering why Estonia was bugging me to find your room, I see he's taken a liking to you"

"I'm not a baby chick Egypt!" Estonia groans - still hugging me.

Egypt laughed "of course you aren't, well then so long mongrels! Ha-ha-ha!"

"Ah, wait!..." I called but he already left.

I blinked a few times trying to process what's happening; okay, I have an Estonia who's hugging me tightly infront of the door and if Finland knew about this he's going to kill me for sure...

I sigh and took a step back to close the door "you can let go now Estonia" I said and he did, his closed eyes opened as soon as his face faced me.

"It really is you, yet why can't you remember me?" His expression was sad and disappointed. I can't help but feel bad even though I've done nothing wrong... Right?

I made Estonia sit down on the sofa and kneeled infront of him before holding his hand "I'm sorry if I can't remember Estonia, maybe you mistook me for someone else" I said, trying to reason with him.

But as expected, he shook his head and held my hand even tighter "no! It's really you, I know it's you!" He insisted.

I guess reasoning with him won't work "okay, okay let's just say I really am her, but we can't explain that I've never once left my country right? when did you meet her anyways?"

"Back in the...80's or 90's somewhere in between" he replied with a pout.

At that time...

"That time, there was endless war in my country so I couldn't leave, in fact, I was even held captive..." I explained, which caused him to flinch and look down.

Estonia pulls his legs to his chest, curling into a ball on the sofa "it's definitely you..." He muttered.

Even if I force him, I'm sure he wouldn't accept it. He's like a little kid even though he's a little older than me.

I stand up and sat besides him, leaning back on the backrest, the soft cushion making me sink and just comfortable.

"What makes you think I'm her?"

Estonia perks up and turn to me, he can't see me but if he keeps it up with eyes open, no one will suspect he's blind "your voice and

your touch" he replied.

I smiled and pats his head "that's not enough reason to point me as her"

Estonia leans in to my hand and held his hand on top of mine on his left cheek "this, this touch of yours... it sends a shiver that no one can do"

Estonia looks down, "and your soothing voice that leaves a permanent mark in my mind" closing his eyes, he leans even more to my hand, burying his nose and lips on to my palm "not only that, you're the only woman who's ever touched me like this, because most of them would be grossed out"

Ahhh... Wait, if I say I'm grossed out as well, will Estonia finally calm down and approve that I'm really not her? I feel bad... But it would be even more bad if Finland knew.

"What about you?" He looks at me on the corner of his eyes, half his face still buried on my palm, I can feel his lips kissing and pressing "do you think, my eyes are like monsters?..."

I swallowed hard and took a deep breath.

It's for his sake, it's to finally show him that I'm not *her,* or whoever *her* even is.

"Yeah, it's like a monster, but not a scary monster... Just a normal monster" I replied.

He looked at me, shocked and eyes wide, so it's done. I've finally draw the line and make him realize that he definitely mistook me for someone.

Slowly removing my hand from his, I sat back down properly and sink between my shoulder. I'm sorry Finland if it hurt you, I'm really sorry...

"You..." He spoke and I closed my eyes to embrace myself a set of crying and attacks "it's really you!!!!!"

Eh?

Suddenly, he tackled me and I fall on the sofa with him on top while hugging and squealing "I knew it was you!!!"

What's happening? Why is he happy? Why is he not crying???

"Estonia!" The door swings open and there stood the person who I don't want to see this situation.

"H-hello, f-finland" I greeted nervously while Estonia ignored him and continued to nuzzle his face on my neck.

"I told you! It's really! Really her!!! She said the same thing my sweetheart would say!" Estonia faced Finland with flushed face and an overjoyed expression "I finally found you!!!!!"

Sweetheart?

"Actually, no girls would be grossed out on me! They all *love* to get close to me and I would always say the same thing to them and they all answer the same thing; they aren't afraid and my eyes are beautiful and such, blah, blah, blah" Estonia sticks out his tongue before facing me again "but you! My sweetheart said otherwise! My pity act doesn't affect her so she said the opposite and it's only ever been you!!"

I'm so confused, so, so confused...

I turn to Finland again who stood there, glaring at me, scowling at the scene and just grossed out "enough already Estonia!" He yelled.

Estonia stops and got off the sofa, stepping infront of me "don't ever, hurt my sweetheart"

Finland punches the wall besides him causing me to flinch, but not Estonia, despite being blind he didn't even budge; as if he knew Finland would do that.

"Girls are nothing but manipulative creatures, they'll tear you apart and play you until they're satisfied" he said through gritted teeth.

Estonia closed his eyes "that applies to all girls then? It means your one true love is also a manipulative, lying bitch?"

Whoah, Estonia said the "*B*" word.

Finland glares at Estonia, which I think he never ever does "watch your fucking mouth; because without me, you're nothing. You need my eyes to see! You need my guide Estonia! Don't talk like that to me!"

"I've had enough of your controlling personality!" Estonia yelled back.

I stayed there, frozen as the scene before me was tense and just confusing. I can tell Finland cares for Estonia as his friend and I can't imagine how that must've hurt for him.

"Yo, what is going on here?" Suddenly, the door across ours opened; revealing Joe and Russia peeking, curious as to what was the commotion.

"What happened sunshine?" Russia asked and I couldn't answer.

Because how can I when between us, there's two country leaders arguing and glaring while one of them is blind.

Finland clenched his fist that veins are popping and slight blood was dripping "see what it does to us? See what a single girl does to a long time friendship?" He spoke through gritted teeth.

"Don't blame this on sweetheart, she's done nothing wrong, it's your stupid idea that girls are the same, but don't forget, without them there's no men in this world, so be thankful and stop acting like a baby because of a girl who dumped you!"

That was the last straw for Finland to snap; taking the vase that's besides the bookshelf, he charges up to us and swings the vase to Estonia.

"Look out!" Russia warns.

But it was too late.

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I coughed as I held my ground. There's something warm and liquid sliding from my forehead to my cheek and to my chin.

Shattered glass on the floor and Finland still in a trance of anger.

"Sunshine..."

I touched my cheek where something hot was sliding, I look down to my hand to see blood - blood so thick it almost looked black.

"Sweetheart! A-are you okay?!" Estonia worriedly asked as he nudges me from behind "what happened?! Why did I hear a glass shatter?"

I faced him and gave him an 'ok' sign even if he can't see it "I'm okay" I've been through much worse and this is nothing.

"What the hell man!" Joe exclaimed and pushed Finland against the wall while Russia went to the kitchen to get the first aid.

"Hey guys! Malaysia is finally in th- AHHHHH!!!! BLOOD!" Malaysia finally came with Indonesia behind him; he points at me with a shocked expression.

"Uhmm..." I couldn't answer, I don't know how to answer.

"What's happeni-" a drop of blood lands on Estonia's back hand, he leans it close and smells it "it smells like iron, is this blood? Why is there blood?!" He panicked while holding on to my arm tightly.

"Your friend Finland here is nuts! He took the vase and plans to break your skull apart!" Joe replied, eyes still locked on to Finland.

I'm so confused what's happening, this wasn't suppose to happen, I

tried to stop it but I guess it didn't work.

"Vase? What vase? It better not be the holy vase" Germany came in with Israel and Brunei behind him.

Indonesia turns to him with a worried look "*it is* the holy vase" he stated.

Why is everyone gathering up now?

Germany's glasses suddenly cracked and falls to his knees while holding his heart "ugh! Not the vase!!! It's the holy vase!" He exclaims "WHO DARES BREAK THE VASE?!"

Joe stood there before stepping back away from Finland and points at him "he did, he hit the holy vase to philipia"

"WHAT?! THE GODDESS!?!???"

Brunei sighed and came inside before going to the kitchen "let's clean the wound first" he said.

"Angel what happened?"

Do I really have to explain everything? I'm tired, I just want peace.

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"Thank you Russia" I said as they finally patched up my forehead although my shirt is stained red.

Red; glad my alter didn't come out, although I almost felt like switching to him but I can't let that happen, cause if it did. He'll kill everyone.

Brunei sat down across me with Israel and Malaysia besides him while Indonesia and Estonia sat with me.

Joe and Russia were standing besides the sofa and Finland is nowhere, he left as soon as Germany was about to give him the scolding. Maybe that vase was important to Germany; although I don't think Finland left cause he was scared, I think he left for some other reason...

I should apologize.

"Sweetheart..." Estonia called besides me.

"What the? *Sweetheart*? Who you calling sweetheart?" Brunei asked giving Estonia the strict look even though Estonia won't be able to see it.

Estonia pouts and lays his head on my left shoulder "philipia is my sweetheart; and I'm sorry about what Finland did, I'll scold him! Don't worry"

I smiled weakly, I lost too much blood and I just want to sleep. But I am worried about Finland, maybe I really am the reason why they're fighting now.

"Control that guardian of yours!" Israel exclaimed and Estonia nodded.

"I will. It's just, we've never fought this bad before and I think I went out of line" he replied.

"What's wrong with him, he isn't like that Estonia!" Germany cried while collecting the shards of his vase "he'll be met with a lot of misfortunes and karma!" He sobbed.

Poor Germany, his favorite vase is now broken.

"Calm down germs" Israel responded.

Estonia sighed and fiddle with his walking stick "Finland has high bipolar level and when he gets mad, he becomes aggressive, I pressed all the buttons that shouldn't be pressed anyways that's why he did what he did... I'm sorry" Estonia faced me, tears threatening to spill.

Malaysia sighed "sounds like a Finnish person afterall" he said before Indonesia nudges him harshly "what? It's true anyways" he stated and leans back on the sofa.

"It's just like Mexico, although he doesn't go physically aggresion, only verbal. His mouth won't stop, cursing" Joe spoke.

It's true, Mexico had anger issues after the war in his country before, god knows what happened to him. But at least he's okay now and recovering, he wasn't worse like before...

My head is throbbing, too much has happened since earlier and today. Why can't there be one day where there are no surprises?

Estonia stood up and took his stick, "I'll go and look for Finland, half of this is my fault anyways" he said before walking to the door, tapping his stick.

"I'll go with him..." Germany offered and followed behind Estonia.

"Yeah he's right, he went too far" Israel added and followed as well "and you'll have a hard time looking for him"

"No I won't!"

"Estonia, you're blind. Just pray to the goddess while we walk" Germany sternly suggested.

"Goddess? Who?"

After that, they closed the door behind them.

Brunei stood up and remove his vest "I'll cook dinner today, rest for a while Philip" he smiled and pats my head.

But my body heals...

"Okay, thank you Brunei" I said.

Indonesia followed behind him "I'll help, what do you want today?" He asked me.

"Anything is fine" I answered.

Indonesia smiled back and pats my head "okay" he said and gave me a thumbs up.

I stood up as well while Brunei and Indonesia went to the kitchen "is there anything else you need help with?" Joe asked me and I shake my head.

"I'm okay now, besides my body heals so I'll be fine later"

Joe nods to my reply before going to the kitchen as well "I'll eat here instead guys" he said.

Now it was just me and Russia, "you should go back to your room now" he said and offered a hand but I shake my head.

"I can go by myself" I replied.

As I went to my room, Russia was following behind me "is there something else you need Russia?"

Russia just stood there, eyes distant. He opened his mouth and was about to say something but quickly shuts them.

"You can tell me anything, my body is healing so the wound is slowly closing up" I reasured, but I can't deny ho dizzy I am.

Russia sighs and looks at me in the eyes "I'm sorry about what I did... I know it's late but... I didn't know what came over me"

What he did? What did he do? Ah, is it perhaps him smoking? I can understand that.

I giggled and pats his head, although I had to tiptoe and he had to crouch down a little, I was still able to do it.

"I'm sure you needed it" I said.

Russia looks away and leans close "then, if I do it again do you think I'd needed it?" His voice was husky and deep, I don't know if there's a meaning behind it or not.

His words make me confused, I mean I'm in no position to forbid him to smoke, but it's still better if he controls it.

But then again, I don't know anything about smoking but I do know it's bad if you suddenly stop it, especially when you're used to doing it.

"Yeah, of course you needed it" I replied with a smile.

Russia looks taken aback, but quickly composed himself, "are we even thinking about the same thing?" The muffled sounds of pans and pots from the kitchen, the muffled voices of Brunei, malaysia and Joe. They echo in this small hallway.

"Do you know what I needed then?" He asked, eyes firmly gazing onto mine.

I shake my head "no?"

Is it not cigarette? Ah, maybe it's vodka. I know how he loves vodka, I even mistook beer for vodka that he drank before.

My head is still a bit fuzzy, but even if it's healing, it's painful like crazy. Not like the time I slammed my head on a car, but it's still painful.

Russia sighs, "nevermind" he leans back, his tall height just looms over me. Ahhh... why?

"Then, I'll go to my room now"

He nodded and held the knob on my door. When's suddenly, we heard a loud clank from the kitchen.

"What happened?" Russia called before turning to me again "stay here" he gestures me and I nodded before going to the kitchen.

I can't understand what they were saying other than hear they're soft voices that seems to whisper; slowly walking towards at the end of the short hall I hear brunei say something in a panicked tone.

"They couldn't find them!"

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I let Germany and Israel guide me outside the dorm to look for finland. Germany kept muttering words like goddess this, goddess that. I didn't even know he became this religious, he wasn't like this before.

"You'll get used to it" I hear Israel on my left side; whisper to me.

I leaned close "how long has he been like this?"

I can't tell what kind of expression he's making, but I can tell he's grown used to it "uhhh... Who knows? Probably a million years ago, I don't remember" he replied.

"Ah-ha! Finland must've been here, wait till I find him! he'll get a load of my wrath!" Germany exclaimed and ran off to God knows where.

I hear Israel sigh "let's look over here" he said and held my shoulders as he took me somewhere.

The whole time all I relied on was my ears, I know and I can tell the difference of footsteps by different people and I've been with Finland for so long.

So I know his footsteps better than anyone.

But aside from that, my heart still won't calm down.

Why?

My sweetheart; I finally found her. All this time she's here, in this school that I've refused to go. If I knew then maybe I would've came

here faster than lightning.

God knows how much I missed and searched for her, she was the girl who saved me. The girl who helped me, the girl who's voice still lingers in me.

I can still remember her touch, her desperate plea as she tried to save me from long ago, and I'm not mistaken. It's really her.

"Oh, Iran and cosmos!" I snapped back and turn to Israel who called someone from afar.

I can hear two sets of footsteps, one is consistent and one I can tell is clumsy by how childish their steps are.

"Good evening to you too Iran" Israel replied even though Iran said nothing.

"Ah, no, actually we're here to look for someone" he said again.

Seriously, how can I not hear Iran talk? Oh, maybe he can't at all?

"I saw someone funny looking go to the restricted area of the school" a voice that seems to be transfered from a phone, spoke.

"Oh really? Like, do they have this strange hat?" Israel asked.

"Yeah, is it Finland you're looking for?" The person - I assume is cosmos, asked.

"Yeah! Where is that restricted area anyways?"

They both begun to talk when I suddenly felt a tap on my left shoulder "you, are, Estonia?" A voice, a bit slur, spoke to me.

"Ah yes and you are Iran?"

I thought he can't talk?

"Yeah"

"You can talk?" I asked.

"Uh huh, I just can't hear" he replied.

Ahh, that makes sense.

"Thanks bud, come on Estonia"

Israel then bid goodbye to cosmos and Iran before their footsteps starts to fade away.

"Where is he?" I asked, tapping my walking stick.

"According to Cosmos, he's seen entering the restricted area where there's a small lake that they've block and plan to create something I don't know and don't give a shit" he answered.

"I didn't know there's a lake here, although I know there's a pond somewhere" I said.

"Ahh, that pond? It was blocked off by tethys and no one can enter there anymore, he said it's a private one now" he sighed "and I think I know why, probably has something to do with angel"

I tilt my head "who's angel?"

Israel chuckled "angel is philipia, I call her angel because... Well, she is one"

Even if I can't see, I can tell Israel is smiling and blushing, just the tone of his voice I can tell he cares for her.

As expected of my sweetheart.

"Did she do something amazing to make you call her like that?" I asked.

Israel took a deep breath from the evening spring breeze "yeah, not just something amazing, she did something unbelievable..." He replied, soft and light "she saved me when I was desperate for help, she didn't ask for anything in return and even if her country was falling and in the middle of war, she still accepted me with open arms"

I wonder what my sweetheart looks like? All I know is that her face is small and soft, her lips is warma and her voice sweet like honey that leaves a lingering mark on you.

"What does, sweetheart look like?"

I've known her for so long yet don't don't know her face, because at that time, nobody knows or even seen her.

People said I must've imagined her because of my loneliness. But I'm blind so I can't even imagine it.

"Hmmm, let's see, she has a sincere mismatched eyes"

Her eyes are mismatched?

"And a smile that can blow you away, she smiles so sweetly and just, you can't help but not look away"

I wish I could see it...

"And her scent, is unforgettable"

"Yeah, her scent is minty and it just hits that perfect spot of scent you love"

Israel chuckled softly "yeah, she does"

We stop our tracks and Israel turn me to a direction "we're here and as expected it's blocked" we walked a little farther and he made me sit on a bench "I'll go and ask someone, you stay here got that?" He ordered and I nodded.

Israel seems to be used to this, he knows what to do, as expected of the holy Land with such unholy mouth.

"Got it" I answered.

"Good, you better stay or else I'll let you listen to something horrifying!" His voice trails off as he runs off somewhere to ask for assistance.

I lean back on the bench and recall on happened back at the dorm.

"Yeah, but not a scary monster, just a normal monster..."

I snorted and giggled at her reply, it's so honest and straightforward. I can tell she's the type who just wants to avoid trouble and have a normal life, despite being a female country leader, and the world knows they are rare.

But unfortunately for her, that's the answer I've been looking for. All my life people would say:

"*No! Don't ever say your eyes are like a monster, for me. It's the most beautiful eyes in my life"*

"I love you more than anything in the world Estonia, and I'm not afraid of your eyes"

All flattery, I can tell they aren't from the heart, I can tell they just want to be different. But their answers are expected, so I didn't take them seriously and in the end, they fell out of love for me.

Good for them, they should've just left since the beginning. It's better for me.

I sigh and fiddle on my walking stick.

"What's taking Israel so long?" I asked myself when I suddenly hear rustling on my left side, I stood up and used my walking stick, tapping it on the ground "Finland?" I called but no answer.

I take a step closer and closer, not even knowing where I'm going, I can hear distant conversations from afar and I can hear soft steps not far from me.

"Finland?" I called again.

Still no answer; stepping a bit closer, I jumped a little when I felt something light on my arm, stepping back and tried to reach what touched me.

"Oh, it's just a leaf"

I sighed in relief when I felt soft waters drop on me before I hear rumbling from the sky and a gust of cold wind "it's going to rain and it's gonna be a strong one" I said to no one in particular.

"Estonia! We found Finland!" I hear Israel behind me, did I really walked that far? His voice is far.

"Real--" my sentence was cut off when I stepped on a small pebble and slip backwards.

It's fine, I'll just fall butt first on the ground.

But no; I'm not. Instead, I rolled like a ball from what seemed to be a slope.

Why is this school surrounded by trees?! This is practically a jungle already!

I finally stopped and coughed a little from the rocky ride, there were rocks and branches and leaves blocking and hitting me.

"Ugh" I groaned and sit up from my position "ow...." I hissed when I suddenly felt my right ankle throbbing in pain, I might've sprained it.

"Estonia?!"

Israel called again, but this time, it's definitely far away, did I fall from mount Fuji or something? His voice was echoing.

The slope was short but still dangerous, I can feel cuts all over me.

I was about to call back when the sky rumbled hard and there; a hard heavy rain dropped.

"Israel!" I called but still nothing. I'm at a jungle like area, but I can't know since I can't see and I dropped my walking stick while falling and now it's raining "Israel I'm here!" I called but, there was no answer.

I'll just stay here like this. The place I'm at is probably the wooden area where there's a short slope falling to a lake behind the dorms.

And it's also where the border that separate the female and male academy.

I sigh as I hugged myself, how I wish I stayed with sweetheart instead, but I know I have to take responsibility. It was my fault Finland snapped and smacked the vase to sweetheart.

Everything is a mess because I was overjoyed meeting her again.

"See what it does to us? See what a single girl does to a long time friendship?"

"And see what it does to your stupidity and idea that all girls are the same as your ex girlfriends?" I scoff and hugged myself.

Finland met a woman who he calls his one true love, but she disappeared right before his eyes and after that, he begun searching for her, but unlike me I never mistook someone to someone else. He dated his first girlfriend but ended up dumping him after taking what she needs, same goes the second one. After that, he closed himself and never again love, and that his one true love was just an illusion the day he saw her.

But if you ask me, I don't think she was an illusion. Maybe just like mine, my sweetheart who saved me, also disappeared like air, was the same, she walked by like the wind and gone like the smoke.

"Estonia"

Ahh, just her voice saying my name really sends a shiver to me.

"Estonia!! Damn it! Where are you!?" Finland calls, his voice raspy and just dead tired "come on! Where are you!? Germany is mad like a dragon!"

Stupid Finland, why are you the one searching, I still haven't apologize you stupid bean brain.

I stood up and stumble a little before taking a deep breath and screamed "I'M HERE YOU STUPID BEAN BRAIN!"

"Estonia?! What in the world are you doing down there!?"

I can finally hear his footsteps getting closer, but the strong heavy rain was blocking a bit of my hearing.

"I don't know, maybe it's because I was looking for you!" I yelled and I hear small twigs and branches breaking and snapping.

I was about to take a step closer but the loud thunder startled me making me stumble back "ah! Finla--"

Water.

I fell back to a cold water. I can't feel the ground, so it's deep!

Oh no, oh no, no, no. Give me ghost and demons, just not water where I can't see anything and imagining the worst creatures living here is terrifying!

I resurface but because I sprained my ankle, I can't stay up! I can't find the ground, I could be at the middle of the lake already which I wouldn't know.

So it's scary.

"Help! Finland!!" I yelled.

Oh no, Finland is also afraid of waters, if he saw me drowning right now, he'll be paralyzed at his position.

"Estonia! Oh my God..." I hear him not far from me. Or maybe he's already at the scene of me drowning and desperate for air.

I kept calling his name but I can't tell what he's doing.

So he's really paralyzed at his position.

Finland's mother drowned when he was a little boy, so basically, he's traumatized. And if I die, people will blame him again, and he'll grow worse over time - again.

Pangaea, I thought you were the safest country yet, why am I already dying? Ahh but, thanks to you I finally met my sweetheart, I finally found her again, I finally got to say what I always wanted

to say.

This situation, reminds me of the time where I accidentally slipped and fell on a river and nobody came to me except her.

Yes, my sweetheart, she saved me... And I finally got to say *thank you.*

Thank you, really. For giving me a second chance to live and meet you again.

As my energy finally subsided, I sank slow in this dark, quiet, and cold place. No gravity, no air - nothing. It's a hollow empty place with no end.

If I breath, it feels like I'm inhaling fire, it feels like I'm inhaling needles...

It hurts, it burns...

Ahhh, this is my end...

Or so I thought. The undisturbed water, was disturbed. The steady water was moving, I heard a muffled splash of water from above.

Finland snapped back? That's odd, he never does that... But I can't complain, although I think it's too late, I'm sinking much faster than anything, sinking faster than a rock falling...

But a hand grabbed my left hand, pulling me close and pressing their lips on to mine.

This lips, I can never forget them...

My lungs were slowly filled with little air for me to breath before they finally swam back up and resurface...

"Nmhn! Finland! Snap out of it! And get help!"

My sense of touch is fading... But my hearing isn't.

In this dark, black world. A voice sliced through it filling it with

hope and purpose...

Sweetheart; once again you've come to my aid...

She pulled me out of the water but I can't move, I can hear, but I can't move.

"Finland! Snap out of it!"

See? Finland is in a deep trance, he'll need therapy again... I'm such a fool.

Suddenly, I hear a sharp slap "get your self together! Estonia needs you right now! Go and prove yourself you're his friend!"

Whoah, sweetheart yelled... Scary. And she even slapped Finland, now that's what I want to see.

"Ah, I... Uhh..."

"Go! Call everyone!"

She actually snapped Finland back to reality, she's really something. As expected of my sweetheart.

"Okay, I'm... Hang in there Estonia!" Finland yelled and I hear him ran off to somewhere.

Sweetheart went to my aid again and pressed her lips against mine, filling my water filled lungs with air before pressing her hands on my chest again and again.

"Come on Estonia, wake up!"

"Come on Estonia, wake up..."

Same words, you're saying the same words again...

"Wake up, hang in there, don't let go!"

"Wake up, hang in there, don't let go..."

How much proof do you need? That I'm right all along, that you are

my sweetheart, the one who saved me once...

And the one to save me again...

"Estonia wake up, please! Breath for me..."

"Estonia wake up, please... Breath for me..."

Again, same words... This is too much proof already.

"Ghn!!" My body jolted as the air I inhaled from the lake escaped from my lungs.

Air, I can finally breath fresh air, I can finally feel the droplets of rain falling on to me and my face and possibly on to sweetheart too...

I gasped and I can feel her rest her head on to my chest "thank God...thank God..."

Wasn't she wounded? She came to save me even if she was wounded. Really, you're something else...

"Sweetheart..." I called.

She was sobbing, it's cute yet it hurts me - it hurts me to know I made her worry.

"You saved me again..." I said "it's like we reenacted what happened back then"

She still sobbed but I can tell she's listening to what I'm saying.

"Years ago, I was drowning, much like this. When I thought I was about to die, I was saved by a woman, she comforted me in the rain and kept repeating words that *it's going to be okay,* her warm hands kept me going until help arrived..." I raised my hand and lightly brushed it on her cheek before cupping it "I never once again met her or talked to her or even thanked her. Of course I met her before I drowned, but how can you look for someone who's name isn't even Mary...?"

I now held both her cheeks, making sure she's facing me "and now that I'm sure she's you and that you're back, and that I've found you... I'm never letting you go, never..." I held her right hand and placed it on my chest "ever letting go of this warm hand, the hand that kept me warm, and the hand that I will never forget..."

I let my marks glow, my senses sharper than ever "Accept my heart, accept my request, unkept promises is what I detest; I, Estonia. Land of Mary, shall promise and offer philipia, pearl of the orient seas, marriage and part of the line..." I can feel my body creating a new mark on my chest.

When suddenly, I felt something else as well, heat, pressure and *desire*.

"Oh my God..." I muttered, hand tightly holding on to hers "your body and marks, are compatible to mine..."

Marking compatibility, is a way of the marks telling you who your fated one is.

And to think, it was her...

One compatibility per person, this is the happiest day of my life!

"Sweetheart, my Mary..."

Mary... My sweetheart Mary. The nickname of my country was named after her.

Although her real name is philipia, I'm sure she did it for a reason, lying about your name I'll accept it once, I'll accept your pretty lie once...

"Ahhh what's happening..." She spoke, her voice husky and shaky.

She must've not known what marking compatibility is...

"There!" Israel called "Angel! Estonia" finally, help came.

Ahhh, no good. Help is on the way but my conciousness is fading.

"Estonia, no wake up...!" She said through a painful groan. Don't force yourself sweetheart, because when the two fated pair finally meets, they're body would be desperate for that *lustful* desire...

"Ugh... Can't think straight..." I muttered before my hsenses all faded one by one.

I'll be okay, I just need sleep.

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"*Hello?" I called.*

"Oh my goodness! You scared me" a soft spoken voice answered, how did they get here? A thief perhaps? A break in?

"W-who are you? What are you doing in my garden?" I stutter, pointing them or whoever they are my walking stick.

" Uhmm ... I'm taking a shade, I'm sorry" they replied, still soft spoken. Hmm, she doesn't sound bad.

I lowered my walking stick and took a step back a little from the stranger that's in my garden "It's okay. As long as you're not stealing" I said.

They giggled, a cute one too "Hehe~ there's nothing to steal here" she said.

Somehow that irritates me, puffing my cheeks I stomped my feet "how dare you! My garden is priceless, all kinds of flowers are here!" I defend.

I felt them stand up from the rustling of the grass, the sound of someone dusting their skirt, they giggled again "really? But my favorite flower isn't here" she said.

Crossing my arms, I pout "well, what flower do you want?"

Is this a scam? Why am I offering her? She's a stranger, but a soft stranger who's voice is really nice.

"Sampaguita" they replied.

I tilt my head to the side " sampa .. what?"

" Sampaguita " they walk a little farther and I tried to follow, although their pace of walking is slow "ever heard of it?" She asked stopping, making me stop as well.

I shrink between my shoulders and turn to the other way "well, no. I haven't heard of it"

"So you don't know what it smells like?"

I shake my head - afraid I must've disappointed this stranger. How weird.

I hear them walk closer to me but still keeping a distance, "here, this is a sampaguita" she said and I felt her hands hold mine, placing something on my palm , she's soft...

"Oh, uhmm...thanks" I lean the flower close to me and the strong minty scent pierces my nose, it doesn't hurt and it hits all your spot.

"So?"

"This is nice; sampaguita... I might ask mother to buy one for me"

"Unfortunately they can only be found in specific places"

I peeked up and followed her steps that's walking away again "you travel?"

"Hmm, sort of. In a way"

She's interesting "whoah! I also want to travel!"

She laughed and I felt her pat my head and I realize she's actually small. She struggles to reach my head too; how cute "someday, you'll be able to

circle the world, just wait a little more longer Estonia"

"Oh, okay...wait"

How did she know my name?

I was star struck for a second that I didn't even realize she's walking far away already "ah! What's your name?" I asked.

She stopped again before I hear a faint sound of static noise and the sound of distortion and soft drum "Mary... My name is Mary, but call me sweetheart instead "

A strong gust of wind past by when I suddenly don't feel her presence anymore; her presence, was comforting and nice.

Who was she? Was she a magician? Or really just a sneaky stranger?

Whoever she is, I hope I get to meet her again. I held the sampaguita flower she gave me and leans it close to my nose again.

"It's minty... Mary huh? But I should call her sweetheart? Such an interesting person"

Why do I feel like her name isn't Mary?

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< < < End of Chapter 2 : Sky is Blue, Sea is Red.

> > > Coming Chapter 3 : Sunflower.

_____

[No facts for today as well~ but I hope you enjoyed the story as much as I enjoyed writing it~]

[Although I apologize if it's me who edited, D-kun is hard to message]

[And I also apologize if the writing is a bit rushed? I dunno, but I'll still apologize and hopefully you enjoyed it]

[Anyways ~]

[See ya on the next one~]

[Much love ~]

Chapter 3 : Sunflower

[image] [image]
[image] [image]

[There will be Grammatical Errors and typos since D-kun will no longer be with us]

[Art by me ＜3]

[Enjoy~]

_____

Line / The line:

An act of courting for male leaders to their chosen partner; body markings will be drawn and added on the leaders body - the chosen partners pain will be shared with the leader; a sign of devotion and loyalty.

WARNING:

If the chosen partner ends up with someone/ loves someone/ chose someone; the body markings will burn the skin of the leader and it will permanently leave a scar (the symbol itself) - a sign of pain, foolishness and despair.

Soul collision / Soul amalgamate:

An act of courting and sacrifice for male leaders; losing their own sense of emotion while wholeheartedly devoting ones body and soul to the chosen partner - a symbol of unconditional love and selflessness.

WARNING:

Once cut off, the leader will feel manic depression and all stages of sadness and emotional pain, (extremely dangerous, choose and act rationally)

Marking compatibility / Fated pair.

A sign where two people are fated and born for each other, (only for leaders) considered a myth and is rare. But once encountered; Both will feel intense heat and physical desire: also known as the "aphrodisiac affect" both partners will feel intense heart beating, high fever, higher hormones and obsession for desire.

WARNING:

If married and has encountered your fated pair, immediate action to break off (consent and agreement of the pair) - ***Will suffer lost of senses and reality touch for months.*** *(Proceed with caution)*

Force submission / Alpha's orders.

For male leaders; if one subordinate or one with lower position in the high table disobey and act violent. Male leaders are able to control them through forced submission; completely immobilized and sedated. forced obedience and punished rightly.

WARNING:

Has been considered illegal and abolished by Pangaea (current Continent leader) - Has contradicts human rights and people rights.

Healing

For ***female leaders*** *, they transfer the energy and marking blood to one person, an act of healing and closing up wounds. If physical damage and abnormalities is present; Female leaders may transfer that physical damage to theirs. female leaders body heals (takes for a month or weeks to fully restore the leaders body)*

WARNING *::*

Can only heal one person per day, if forced; marking blood will decrease would result in comatose, mental instability, and ***death*** *(* ***Extremely risky, proceed and act with caution*** *)*

DO NOT HEAL WITHOUT BAPTISM
(Will result in body rejection, blood loss, and ***death*** *)*

To know more about Country leader skills and courting, go to page...

I closed the book and took a deep breath of the warm springs breeze, looking down to the book resting on my lap, I touched the cover that says: *What to know about country leaders book 1.*

I sighed; all this time, I didn't even know that *marking compatibility* or *fated pair* - even exist. I only found out about it last week.

Last week; Estonia nearly drowned at the lake where they blocked to avoid accidents. And it happened because of me, because Finland and Estonia - Who's been friends for so long; fought because Estonia insisted I'm *Mary* or what he likes to call me; his *sweetheart.*

And according to Estonia, I saved him before when he nearly drowned as well - of course it's still hard to believe but what's done is done. I can no longer stop him or reason with him since he uses the excuse *sweetheart is my fated pair.*

Even Finland gave up trying to retrieve his friend; honestly, it hurts me to see Finland looking so lonely and distant now. Sure they still hang out but whenever Estonia sees me, he'll be with me for the rest of the day; leaving Finland all by himself.

And it's really hard to separate him from me when classes resume.

He's quite a handful guy, but as long as he's happy it's fine. Although I still can't help but feel bad for Finland, it felt like I stole someone precious from him.

They've been friends for so long they're literally brothers already - and I took that away from him.

Maybe, if I could go back in time, maybe it would've been best if I didn't approached Estonia when he tripped.

Ahh, such a thing that can't happen.

And now I have to deal with the consequence.

"Your scent just makes me dizzy sweetheart" Estonia nuzzles his face on my right shoulder while wrapping his arms around mine.

"Hey! Get off philis! Get off!!" Ukraine whined while attempting to pull Estonia from me, but he didn't even budge from his position.

"Will you two behave?" Poland scolds whole wrapping his hands around my right arm "Philip is bothered!"

Iran came up to us and started making sign languages nonstop and of course none of them got it since it was too fast "what did he say?" Ukraine asked glancing back to us.

"He said: *please release red rose, she's clearly bothered, and Estonia you've been smelling her scent since earlier it's disturbing"* cosmos walked up behind him and translated for him as he walked behind Iran before patting his head.

"No!" Estonia cried and even wrapped his arms around mine more tightly "she's my fated pair!"

Here we go again.

"She's supposed to be near me!" He continued.

Iran stomps his feet and puffs his cheeks like an angry chipmunk; he glanced back to cosmos and started tugging his sleeve while pointing at us.

"Yeah, like he said, release shooting star, you guys are like annoying maggots" cosmos calmly said.

"It's Estonia here who's the maggot!" Ukraine berated still struggling to pull Estonia.

Poland pouts and nuzzles his face on my right shoulder; he's been really clingy lately, I wonder why?

Just then, we heard a heavy, loud running steps - and we clearly know who it is.

"Maappppllleeee syyyyyrruuuppp!!!!" Canada yells through the corridor before jumping out to the garden and tackles me to a tight hug; of course Poland and Estonia are still holding on "my maple syrup! Syrruppp!!!!!" He squealed rubbing his cheek against mine.

"H-hello Canada" I greeted "where's France? It's weird not to see you without him"

Canada frowns and cringes "eww! I can be all by myself once in a while, but today I actually escaped from him!" He happily replied.

That's great...?

I sigh as they all begun talking and arguing about something that I can no longer understand, my head hurts and it's hard to breath.

I peek over to Estonia who seems to be napping on my shoulder and I can see his long eyelashes.

Fated pair; I look down to the book again and recalled what it said. One fated pair per person.

When we both discovered we were fated pairs, I begun to feel the same intense pressure between my thighs when I was in the classroom in professor Reich's class. It felt the same but, it should be impossible.

I shake my head and focused on to something instead.

"Maple syrup doesn't want to be with you! She wants to be with me!" Canada exclaimed.

Ukraine clicks his tongue and grabs him by the collar, even with a little height difference, Ukraine can be scary when angry "and nobody wants to be with a drug addict!" He berated.

Canada gasp and struggles to break free from Ukraine "oh yeah? She hates to be with a drag queen even more!"

I actually enjoy watching drag queens.

Soon after, the two started bickering like two baby chicks; I want to rest, I want to find a quiet place, I want to read the book more.

"You alright sweetheart?" Estonia whispers, the sound coming from everyone muting itself in the background.

I nodded and leaned a little closer and for some reason, I can hear his heartbeat synchronizing with mine "I'm okay" I replied.

He chuckled and leaned even closer to my ear that only the two of us can hear "you don't seem like it"

I smiled "I really am, I'm just worried about Finland"

Estonia sighs and placed his chin on my shoulder, still close to my ear "don't worry about him, I'm sure he's with Egypt or maybe asleep somewhere in the school" he reasured "are you thinking about Finland even more than me? Your fated pair?"

I soften my eyes and look down "is it bad if I say yes?"

I feel his hand grip a little hard "you shouldn't, you're supposed to think only me and about me" he insisted, like a child hungry for attention.

I chuckled and turn to him "okay, I'm sorry"

Estonia narrowed his eyes, revealing the same blue and clouded eyes "good, don't ever think of anyone else other than me" he happily said and lays on my shoulder; muttering the words "*I love you*" before his head slowly became heavier and heavier and a soft snore can be heard.

I love you. I don't even know how that feels, I know how those three words feel when it comes to family and friends, but when it comes to romance?

I have no idea.

How does it feel to fall in love? What do you feel? How do you feel? What will you feel? All my life I've never fell in love, maybe I did at some point but I must've missed the hints and clearly ignored it.

Am I that oblivious to the point I'm so insensitive? Perhaps I hurt China's feeling when I couldn't answer to his confession.

I want to know and if I really am fated to Estonia; why can't I feel what he feels?

I can feel his heartbeat, it beats the same beat as mine, and I can feel that pressure between my thighs.

But that's it, that's all. And it hurts me that I can't even return it and it even hurts me if I ask him how to fall for him.

That would just sound so insensitive and really... Just really; stupid.

Estonia almost fell from my shoulder but I was quickly to catch him and gently place his head on the grass before doing the same thing to Poland.

We're currently at the school main garden below the spring tree where a shade was covering us; I came here earlier to read the book I just read alone so that I can concentrate and learn more about us country leaders.

But it didn't take long for poland to come, then Ukraine, then Estonia, then Iran, cosmos and Canada.

I stretch my body back, almost as if it were sore from my position.

Although I was.

Canada and Ukraine are still arguing, cosmos and Iran were sitting below the tree while playing a game, Poland and Estonia are asleep - I should get this chance to escape.

I turn to my heels and slowly walk away, pretending I'm just passing by.

"Where are you going shooting star?" Cosmos asked, gaining Canada and Ukraine's attention.

I stop and glance back at them "I'm just gonna buy a drink, I'll be back" I smiled and didn't even wat for their reply.

I just made a run for it.

Everyone sure is touchy and lively on Monday, why is everyone so lovely on Monday anyways?

I took a breather while leaning on the wall inside the corridor while hugging the book before pushing myself against the wall to look around for a better place to read alone.

"Maybe the rooftop would be nice?"

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Academy rooftop

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Peeking through the small gap of the door, I saw J, south, Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia playing some sort of game on their phone. There was also France, Ireland and Scotland leaning on the fence - talking.

If I enter I'm sure I'll just bother them, and I'm sure I wouldn't be able to read quietly. No wonder not many students come here; it's full of country leaders and it would be awkward for them.

What a waste, the wind was quite relaxing too.

"Hmm, I should try the library"

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Pangaea main school library

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"Hmm..." I sulk as I saw Germany, Israel, Brunei, Mexico and Sweden reading and studying in the library, they seemed to be so focused and it would be rude to distract them.

Why did they have to study near the door? If I come in they'll see me, if only they chose somewhere to sit then maybe I can still sneak in and read quietly without them noticing me.

I sigh and turn away from the door and lean against the wall besides it "not the library, not the main garden, not even the rooftop... Should I try the east garden?"

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East garden

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There's a few students napping and reading yet no country leaders in sight.

Perfect.

Peace and quiet, a place where I can read properly with no noise.

"Ahhhh!!!!! Snake! Snake!!!"

I stop and hide behind the door of the entrance for the east garden, before peeking and saw Australia chasing his pet snake while NZ and Joe are helping him.

"Trap him there!" NZ yelled as he went to the opposite direction.

"What?! I don't want to touch it!" Joe exclaimed yet he still followed where NZ pointed.

Ahhh, not the east either?

I didn't even bother to watch more and just left to look for another place. Oh my goodness; is looking for a place to read really this hard? Or maybe it's hard because I'm avoiding people that might distract me?

Maybe I should try the club rooms instead.

Oh but the students would be using it; maybe the west garden? Where the sunflowers are?

"I should try..." My sentence was cut off when I heard that familiar voice not far behind me.

"Singapore, don't you think it's too much?"

I jolted; panicking a little, I hurriedly looked for a spot to hide - looking left and right, I saw a space behind the stairs.

I quickly yet quietly hid behind it as I hear Vietnam and Singapore getting closer.

"Too much? Don't you know this is an average amount to use sanitizer? Can't you understand how dirty this world is?" Singapore argues.

"Yeah but, you used half of it and you just bought that, there's still the tag on it; see?" Vietnam replied.

They're voices soon faded as they leave.

I sighed in relief and slumps against the wall "This school is big yet no place to even read quietly" I said to myself before standing up and continue the mission.

"Before going to the west wing, maybe I should try the one behind the north Wing building"

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Back building, north Wing.

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I sneakily walk like I'm in a secret mission as I got closer; I look

around the area and there's no one.

"Good, maybe this is my new hiding spot, my new sanctuar--" my sentence was cut off when a deep, husky accent yelled.

"Masky! The hell man!" Russia exclaims as he dusted his pants "you better buy me a new pants dimwit"

I look over to where he's facing and saw tethys holding a bat with his usual mask, while behind him is north, China and Spain also holding a bat.

I haven't seen tethys around and I didn't even know he came back! He's been busy with heir business so it's quite a surprise, I want to go and greet him but; I better to find my own hiding spot first.

I need a quiet place to read.

"You just suck at this rusky" tethys laughed as he placed the bat over his shoulder while holding it.

Has he been eating? He grew thin. Oh dear, he should be eating more, is he eating at all?

I want to go a ask him but I gotta stop myself, I took a deep breath and sigh. I should leave them be and continue my own mission.

But before I could walk away, me and Spain locked eyes and as soon as he saw me, he opened his mouth to call me but I immediately placed my finger on my lips, gesturing him not to call me.

He froze in a weird posture and they all noticed it "what's wrong?" China asked with a raised brow.

Spain kept his guard and pretended to sneeze "dang, allergy" he lied before awkwardly looking away.

North chuckled "I didn't know you have allergy"

"There's a lot you don't know about me" he peeked over to my direction again and I smiled, thanking him.

He smiled back and winked which made me giggle and wave before walking away.

Since this area is now occupied by well known and strong country leaders, it is time to go to the last destination; the west garden.

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West garden

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I tiptoed in the area and found no one; well, no one comes here at all since it's a bit far from where a lot of students are usually at.

I internally cheered at myself before walking to the tree at the middle, it's not as big as at the main garden but, it's enough to give me shade.

As I walk closer, I hear soft rustling and groaning not far from me.

Following the source of the sound, I saw Finland sleeping on the same place I first saw him. But instead of an empty flower bed, it now has sunflowers planted in it and he's sleeping underneath those tall plants.

I sigh and just decided to read in the room before class resume, but before I could even take a step away. I noticed Finland's expression was odd, like he's having a nightmare and is having a hardtime waking up.

Should I wake him up?

Approaching his sleeping form - which is a bad idea since Estonia told me he hates to be bothered when sleeping; I nudge on his shoulder, shaking him, and waking him "Finland, wake up..." I whispered but he kept groaning and beads of sweat were appearing from his forehead.

"Finland, follow my voice..." I said as I leaned a little closer; he started whimpering a bit and breathing heavily - so I didn't have a choice but to shake him roughly "my voice finland, follow it, I'm here" I called again.

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I walk around a vast land of sunflowers, the height of it reaching to my hips.

I examined the place and it seems this valley of flowers is in the middle of a forest; but where is ***this*** *exactly?*

"Amazing... grace... "

I swiftly turn back when a beautiful voice echoed in this windy, peaceful place.

Following the source of the voice, I found a big tree I've never seen before, it's so tall and big, it's branches extending to great measures and leaves dance around it.

And below that amazing, gigantic tree; there's a girl, her back is faced to me and she's seems to be carrying a bouquet of sunflowers; probably from this place.

I opened my mouth to call this person but I don't know their name, I didn't even hear my own voice; but it seems like they did. Stopping her tracks, her midnight dress that flows through the wind .

She slowly turns to me and her face is covered in a black veil, but only half of their face I can see; their nose and lips. She smiled and waved - she knows me?

"Who are you?" I asked, finally I can hear my voice; but this strong wind seems to increase it's volume.

She didn't answer, she just smiled and leaned her nose close to the sunflower she's carrying "I'm sorry, I couldn't help myself..."

Her voice is so gentle. ..

"It's okay" I reasured and she smiled "but, what's your name?" I asked - when suddenly, a strong gust of wind disturbed the place, the sound of the sunflowers dancing in a havoc, the aggresive rustling of the leaves.

And when I look up to the girl again, my eyes widen by how beautiful and breathtaking she is, and yes. I forgot how to breath for a second.

I'm afrai if I blink, she'll disappear ***again.*** *Unfortunately, my eyes became dry and I had to blink multiple times and of course, just as I expected. She's gone.*

"No! Wait! Please! Where are you?!" I yelled and my voice echoed; I'm now alone in this field of flowers with trees surrounding me.

"Please, I want to see you again!" I yelled again but there was no answer.

Her face, Remember it well, remember it well Finland. Remember it well...

"Please forget what you saw..."

I felt a painful throb in my head causing me to yelp out in pain and hold it, kneeling down on the ground as the sunflowers finally towers above me.

The ground is beginning to get soft, it's so soft I'm scared it'll drown me if I move...

That girl, what was her face again? I can't remember... I can't...

"Follow my voice..."

I look around and I'm in a dark void where there's no more flowers or trees or even wind - when did it even turn like this?

"Hello! Someone...!" I yelled and there's no one but me here, I'm sure of

it. I can't feel anyone, I can't hear anyone - it hurts my ear.

A noise, a voice, anything; somebody make a sound.

"My voice finland, follow it, I'm here"

And I did; I followed that same voice that kept pulling me out.

It's her! She didn't really leave, she's here! That's her voice. Gentle and soft, sincere and kind; I'm following it, so please don't go, don't go!

"Ah!"

I grabbed someone's wrist and woke up from that crazy dream, I slowly adjusted my eyes from the sudden light and saw those yellow and Amber eyes that just pierces inside you.

Pierces inside you...?

"Oh, it's just you" I said monotonously.

I groaned and release her wrist that would break if I hold it even more tighter "what are you doing here?" I asked as I felt a pang in my head.

"Y-you were groaning in your sleep, so I thought you were having a nightmare" she answered while looking down.

This woman, is the fated pair of Estonia. It irritates me but, I can't fight against two people who's born for each other and Estonia seems to have grown attached to her.

Well, *too* attached.

It's also me giving her a chance after she saved Estonia; even if I'm like this, I have depths of gratitude in me.

I sighed and fixed my bonete "well I'm awake now so you can go away" I shooed her and she looks at me.

What does she want?

"Uhm, you wouldn't mind if I read here right?" She asked; quite

desperate.

I examined her and she's holding on to a book that talks about country leaders.

She really has no clue huh? So she's really stupid "fine, just go and read over there, stay away from me as much as possible" I answered.

She smiled and nodded before standing up and sat underneath the tree at the middle of the garden.

That's odd, why isn't her little stupid friends with her? Even Estonia isn't with her which is rare nowadays since he kept bragging about him as her fated pair and sticking to her like glue.

Seriously, is she really *that* woman that saved Estonia before? No matter how I look at it, it's really impossible.

But what can I do, what's done is done.

I lay back down on the ground again and stare at the wide blue sky.

My head is spinning from that crazy dream, that girl I saw before just who is she?

She was so beautiful, so beautiful I was star struck and her words that told me to forget about her - I took it seriously and ended up *really* forgetting her.

But I can still remember her voice, but unlike Estonia who's sure about someone even if it's just the voice; I can't determine who it really belongs since, it almost sounds like everyone or anyone with a soft spoken voice is her.

I hear the soft pages being flip softly and I turn to her: reading. Her eyelashes is long and her lips seems kissable, good for her then; she's probably wearing a lipgloss or something, it's too plump.

Whenever I stare at her long enough, I can't help but feel like I've seen her somewhere but I just can't remember who and where I met her.

I turn back to look at the sky again and closed my eyes; it's quiet, thank the heavens Pangaea's lunch break is stupidly long.

No school would allow that but, I guess when you're attending in the world's most advance and well known academy - it's an exception.

I hear her closed the book and stand up from her position before approaching me, she stood above me and I can almost see her underwear; is she doing this on purpose?!

"What the heck? Be aware of what you're doing! I almost saw your underwear!" I said a little bit flushed since... Well, anyone would!

She blinks a few times before tilting her head to the right side "underwear?" She wondered.

She's still pretending to be innocent?! It's obvious on what I meant, sheesh.

"Yeah, underwear! I was laying down and you just stood to where my head is, are you nuts? you want to get laid that much?" I berated.

"Oh!" She perked, finally snapping from that innocent facade. She smiled and lifts her skirt, showing me a short "it's okay, I'm wearing shorts" she happily said.

This woman is such a flirt, ugh. "Yeah, whatever, short or underwear it's the same thing" I said irritatingly "what do you want?" I asked.

She smiled and crouched down on the ground to where I'm at "I just have a question and I can't ask anyone other than you" she spoke, her voice low.

I furrowed my eyebrows and sat comfortably "what?"

Can't she just leave me alone? She already has Estonia why does she still need me to do her bidding?

"How, do you fall in love?"

I blinked three times in a row, processing what she asked. Did she just asked me how to fall in love? Is she serious? Is this her way to make me fall for her? So childish, even an elementary would do the same.

"Beats me, how should I know?" I answered half-heartedly.

She press her lips firmly and holds the book she was holding closer to her "I see, so you don't know as well?"

As well?

This is the reaction I expected "why do you want to know? Falling in love is like common sense" I responded.

But she looked away and shakes her head "I don't know how it feels, and it hurts that I may be insensitive to other people... I might've hurt someone already and I'm too oblivious to even know" she spoke.

Seriously is it a big deal? She should be thankful she doesn't know, but who knows this is her way to get my affection - which of course I wouldn't give. I won't be manipulated by a woman again.

"You don't need to know when you've fallen in love or not, sometimes it just comes, it's a natural feeling" I answered but she still looked confused.

Seriously what does she really want?

She nodded and dust her skirt "okay, thank you Finland" she smiled before walking away, clearly disappointed and unsatisfied with my answer.

I rub the back of my neck irritatingly "stupid" I muttered; referring to her before laying down again.

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(After school)

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"Sweetheart smelled so good! Didn't she?" Estonia walks besides me, hopping and clearly depending on me to guide him to walk properly!

I sighed and I just had enough of sweetheart this, sweetheart that "I don't smell anything, she smells like a normal woman with lots of perfume" I groaned while holding on to his right arm.

Estonia laughed like I just made a joke "sweetheart doesn't like perfumes" he said.

Predictable, a girl trying to be unique and natural, so common "yeah, whatever"

"That's so mean!"

I opened the door towards the dorm building when we suddenly bumped into Canada and Ukraine; Canada was holding a camera and Ukraine was carrying a jar of flowers that I don't know.

"Speak of the devil, we were just talking about you!" Canada smiled, I still can't get over the day she wore a pornhub merch t-shirt, and acting all proud too.

She's probably embarrassed to death, serves her right I guess.

"Ugh, Canada" Estonia bitterly replied "what are you guys doing here?"

"Oh I'm sorry, I didn't know you own the building" Ukraine replied with a banter.

Seriously these three are the obvious lovestruck idiots for that woman. What was her name again? Ugh, whatever it's not any of my business.

While the three of them are talking, I hear familiar voices right outside the building, leaving them for a while I followed it, much to

my curiosity and saw - who I assume is tethys and that woman.

"Did you receive my gift philia?" Tethys asked.

She smiled and beams "yep! Thank you tethys"

Even he's wrapped up in her little fingers? She probably stripped to get his attention or something but who am I to judge?

"That's great, I was planning to send you something different but, I'm sure you'd be more happy to get those instead" he said.

"It's okay, anything you send makes me happy, oh and thank you again for the equipments in the gardening club" she thanked.

Look at the fake smile, seriously they believe that?

Tethys chuckled and pats her head, isn't he known to despise touching girls? Why would he even pat her head casually?

She definitely stripped for him.

"You having fun in that club?" He asked.

She nodded "yes, I really enjoy it"

Tethys smiled "good, as long as your happy I'm happy"

Ugh, what the hell is this scene, it's so gross.

"Finland! Where are you!" I jolted and immediately ran back to them; was I really spying on those two?

"Where were you?" Estonia asked.

"Nature called?" Canada smirked mockingly - which I returned sarcastically.

"Yeah, why do you care?"

Canada rolled his eyes "pssh, come on Ukraine" he gestures which Ukraine followed and walked besides him while me and Estonia walked up to the elevator.

When the elevator opened, we walked inside when suddenly, tethys and that woman came in and followed after us.

"Oh? Are you guys the new batch?" He asked, his eyes tells me that he's judging us internally.

Estonia perks up and nodded "yeah"

"They're Estonia and finland" she introduced.

Why did she had to speak?

"Sweetheart? Ah! You're here?! Why didn't finland tell me?" I rolled my eyes and step to the side as Estonia hugs that woman.

"Hey, watch where you're touching" tethys sternly scolds.

Oh no, Estonia will definitely say--

"She's my fated pair!"

The elevator suddenly feels cold and slow, is it just me or why am I fearing for my life?

"Fated pair?" He menacingly asked which of course, didn't make Estonia scared since he's busy nuzzling his face on her chest.

"It's a long story" she said and taps his arm which immediately calms him down.

What the hell?

"Hmm, I expect you to explain everything tomorrow to me philia"

She smiled, still clueless about the situation "sure, I'll fill you one everything that's happened while you were gone" she said.

Tethys smiled and nods before the elevator for her floor opened. She steps outside which made Estonia frown and sulk "I'll come by tomorrow sweetheart!" He squealed and sends a flying kiss.

She smiled and waved as she walk to her room.

Now it's just us three, "just so you know, fated pair or not, philia will become mine, understand?" He spoke in a cold harsh tone.

"Whatever you say, I don't really care" I replied.

But Estonia refuse to accept "no! She's mine!"

He scoffs and the elevator opened to our floor.

Thank God.

We step outside and I had to pull Estonia out the room while stopping him from fighting tethys, and we don't want that.

He stayed there eyes glued to ours "watch your friend Finland" he smiled before the elevator door closes.

I clicked my tongue and dragged Estonia towards our room.

"Why does he think he can get my sweetheart?!" He stomps his feet infront of the door.

"What happened to this mongrel?" Egypt asked coming out from the kitchen.

Greece faced him who's sitting on the dining area while reading a book with his pet owl; Athena - resting on his shoulder "he's whining about tethys talking about that girl named philipia, I really don't like her" he spoke.

Estonia gasped like he heard something unbelievable from Greece "how could you not like her?! Ah but, it would be a benefit if you didn't. I have too many rivals" he shrug.

I sighed and flop down on the sofa chair with Brazil was playing with his phone with Norway.

"Who is this famous *philipia* anyways?" Brazil asked, eyes glued to his phone.

"She's the only female country leader attending here, I saw her earlier coming down from the rooftop" Norway replied; who's eyes

also glued to his phone.

Brazil chuckled "Zea won't stop bragging about how she helped him see colors"

I raised a brow "see colors? Is he colorblind or something?" I scoff, thinking it's nonsense.

"Yeah"

I flinched and turn to Brazil again, "what?"

Brazil paused his game and turn to me "yeah, he is colorblind and she gave him a glasses to see colors"

"What kind of glasses?" Egypt asked.

Brazil thinks for a minute "ah! I think it was called *monochrome*"

Egypt coughed while drinking water before wiping his mouth with the back of his left hand "monochrome glasses?!" He exclaimed.

Brazil nodded "yeah, what about it?"

"Why? What's with monochrome glasses?" Greece wondered while feeding his owl.

Egypt placed his glass on the table "monochrome glasses is a company that has closed for so many years now, but I do hear rumors that they still make glasses limited only for special people" He answered with a serious face.

I furrowed my eyebrows "so? What's the problem with it?"

Egypt sighed like I lost some common sense "they use real diamonds and minerals!!!"

The room was silent for a second and processed what he said "that's it?" Estonia spoke.

Egypt nods frantically "yeah! It's amazing! I want to be in that place! How was she able to get it!?"

I forgot, this guy is a diamond and gold nerd freak.

I sighed and stood up "I'm going to my room" I said and went ahead.

Closing the door behind me, I locked it and flop down to my bed; staring at the ceiling I slowly feel how heavy my eyeslids are.

I'm back again, in the same field of sunflowers, but this time. I didn't think twice to chase after her and grab her wrist.

Her wrist feels familiar.

"Who are you?!" I exclaimed and she stares at me through her veil.

"Finland" she called.

"Yes, it's me Finland. You? Who are you?!"

She smiled and takes her hand away from me " ***please forget what you saw today"***

I gasped for air as I jolted wide awake from that dream.

I sit up from the same position I was earlier, wobbly walking to my bathroom.

I washed my face before staring at myself at the mirror. I look horrible, that's nice.

I sighed and exit my room; it was dark and quiet, although there's still lights from the small gap under the doors of my dorm mates.

Brazil and Norway's room are still lit including Egypt.

I quietly creeped towards the kitchen and get myself a glass of water, glancing over at the clock - *12:45 am.*

I walk over to the window at the lounge area and pushed aside the curtains to see the empty and quiet school ground below us.

Maybe a walk would help me relax from that crazy dream.

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I exit the elevator and left the building, walking not far from the only source of light; I shudder from the early dawn breeze.

As I walk around I saw two figures not far from me, I took a step closer and rolled my eyes to see who it was.

Walking behind a tree near the two people who's talking; Russia and the woman.

They were talking but I couldn't hear what they were saying but Russia leaned close to her and whispered something, judging by her reaction I think she has no idea.

Like she always act to be.

Russia then pats her head and left, walking back inside the building.

I look back again to her and she has this distant look.

What? Did they break up or something? Pssh, I guess I was half right about her.

She's gonna break down and cry soon. But nope, she didn't. Instead, she takes out a note and jot something on it.

Could it be! It's the list of people she's having a relationship?! With?!

Shit! Is Estonia next? and after they become lovey dovey she'll break up with him and leave him and just put him to her collection?!

Like the other girls that did to him?

"How dare you" I muttered through gritted teeth, punching the tree beside me as I furiously stare at her; standing there and looking innocent.

I got out of hiding and stomp my way towards her "hey!" I yelled and she jumped from my sudden appearance.

"O-oh hello Finland" she greeted with a surprised look.

I grabbed her wirst that feels oddly familiar - before snatching the small notepad she was writing on "ah! P-please not that!"

Good thing she's small, she wasn't able to reach it.

I raised it up and wave it, flipping the pages before I stop to the part where she placed her pen as a bookmark.

These are the names of her collections...?

"Why do I feel so restless when I can't see you?" -Russia

(Did Russia had a nightmare? What did he mean not see me? Does he miss me? I miss him too sometimes, Russia is a good friend)

"Your voice sends a shiver..." -Scotland

(Is my voice scary? I should apologize)

"Until the day you say yes to me, I'll wait" -NZ

(What did he mean? Wait for what?)

I look over to her and back at the notepad while she hides her face with her hands "I'm sorry if I'm so insensitive there!" She cried while covering her face.

What the hell are these? It's like she's highlighting words she doesn't understand and makes a comment about it.

"What is this?" I asked, waving the notepad.

She sinks between her shoulders and look down, fiddling with her thumbs " I uhm, I write the words my friends tells me and I try to

understand what it mean"

What?

"So you were serious about asking me how it feels to fall in love?" I asked, rather surprised.

She nodded.

"What the hell? So you weren't collecting lovers??"

She looks at me with a skeptical look "I've never had one"

"Oh geez" I face palmed and crouched down, internally scolding myself. What the hell is wrong with me? Why am I such an asshole to a woman who did nothing wrong?

Now that I think about it, she never asked for any of this, she never asked to be a fated pair with Estonia.

I gave her notepad back "sorry, I must've jumped to conclusions" I said while looking away.

"I'm stupid aren't I?" She asked "I don't really understand, I know there's a meaning but my mind tells me otherwise, it's like I'm trying to avoid facing the truth..."

I scoff "I'm glad you know you're stupid" I said and stood up.

She nodded in agreement "yeah, that's why I thought I could learn something, even just a little" she closes her notepad.

I stare at her small form, looking down on her feet and hugging the small notepad - so Estonia wasn't joking when he said she's dense, naive and innocent.

And I've been judging her this whole time, I can't believe myself.

"You really wanna know?" I asked and she perks up, looking at me before nodding; a spark of little hope shown in her eyes "when you like someone - not in a friendly way" I stated "your heart would beat fast, your mind is full of them, and your eyes is always on

them, just their touch, and voice; makes you all jumpy and stuff"

She started jotting down notes.

Why am I still here again?

"Jumpy and stuff?" She asked with a curious look.

I was about to answer but we both shiver from the sudden cold wind "maybe we should continue this tomorrow, meet me again at the west garden, I'll wait"

With that, I left but before I could enter the building, I stop and turn to her "also, sorry if I'm an asshole to you the whole day yesterday"

She tilts her head to the side "it's okay...?"

She has no clue, of course; cause I was an asshole to her in my mind.

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11 : 35 am

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I sat under the tree with Estonia besides me, making a flower crown; right now we're waiting for that woman to give her lesson about *romance.* Which Estonia was anticipating for "hey..." I called

"Yeah?" He replied not looking at me.

"Is your fated pair really stupid?" I asked. Estonia snapped and lightly flicked my face since he can't tell where my forehead is "ow?"

"Don't you dare say that! Sure she may be dense and naive but she's not stupid... I think"

I raised a brow "you think?" I asked and he nodded, getting back to making the flower crown.

"Sweetheart has been through so much that you can't imagine, and our mind has some sort defense mechanism that helps us get through bad things" he spoke, plucking one flower and gently twisting and knotting it's stem "and because she's gone through something unimaginable, her mind protected her, creating protectors for her and in result she closed her mind to what was obvious and common and it got worse since she was sheltered by her brother"

"Hmm, so she really has no clue what is really obvious?, Like when someone kissed her or confess to her?" I asked.

Estonia sighs and leans back on the tree we are under "kinda? But she does know when it means when someone kissed her" he paused for a second.

"I think...?" He continued.

I slumped back "huh, so if I do something she doesn't have a single clue?"

Estonia may be blind but he can make expressions; like right now, he's glaring at me with his clouded eyes "no, don't even dare" he pouts "why are you even asking this anyways?"

I shrugged even though he can't see it "she asked for it"

"*Asked* for it? What do you mean?"

I sat up straight as I saw her at the distant walking with tethys, hugging her notepad "she asked me if...." She smiled at him and he smiles at her, no matter how I see it, for me it looks so fake, she look so fake.

"I'm sorry if my words are insensitive!"

Looking closer at her, I'm gonna do something I haven't done in a while.

Waking up to reality, trying to widen my own perspective; thinking out of the box.

She waves goodbye to tethys and walked up to us "if..." I mumbled.

"Hello Finland and Estonia" she greeted with a warm smile.

Bathump.

"She could fall in love..." I continued.

"Sweetheart!!!!" Estonia jumps and immediately tackles her a hug.

Did my heart just jumped?

She sat before us and gave me her notepad that - of course Estonia didn't see or even know "this is?" I asked.

She grins "it's the list of things that I don't understand with Canada's help"

Oh boy.

I took the notepad and read it, and when I did. I immediately closed it and tear it apart, "ehhhh? wh-why?" She cried as I threw the thing away.

"It's trash, why do you need to list porn sites?" I asked boredly and Estonia burst out laughing while holding his stomach.

"I asked Canada what site there is to teach me how to know love"

Unbelievable, this is driving me crazy...

"Why did you ask Canada?"

She thinks for a minute and answered "because he said he knows everything about love" she answered.

"No, it's not. Alright, since you're obviously oblivious to this; I'll tell you 5 things to know you're in love" I spoke and Estonia who's already wheezing besides us.

I held out my hand "first, is that you're always thinking of them. Second, you want to be with them all the time. Third, you become a nervous wreck when you're with them. Fourth, you're always looking at them. And lastly; fifth, your heart raises like a race car" I explained, folding each and one of my fingers as I speak.

She sat there, thinking *really* hard about it. Of course I can't blame her, I mean I guess falling in love is a hard subject for her.

Why does she want to know anyways?

"Heart races..." She muttered before turning to Estonia who finally calmed down "Estonia, can I hold your hand?" She asked and Estonia immediately held her hands instead.

"Gladyly~" he beamed.

She stares at their hand with so much intense focus in her eyes - her eyes are so familiar, gold and Amber... I feel like I've seen it somewhere.

Forget what you saw today.

I furrowed my eyebrows from the sudden throb of pain in my head, damn. I hate feeling this, I feel nauseous when I do "so?" I wondered.

She hums and shake her head "it doesn't race, it's normal"

What is she? Counting her heartbeat?

"Try intertwining your hand with his" I said and she did. Estonia was first to react, he flinched and became stiff as her hands slowly locks her fingers between his.

"Estonia's pulse is getting fast, are you okay?" She asked and we both turn to him who's face is all flushed red.

I pointed it "*that*, if you make that kind of expression, you're in love" I stated.

She looks at me again still with a clueless expression.

This is bullshit, there's no way she doesn't get it!

She turn to Estonia who's like a little girl who's hands were held by their crush. If I was still an asshole like yesterday, I would've flipped when I see this situation.

"Estonia, you're in love with me?" She asked rather shocked.

It's quite obvious, seriously...

"Of course I am! I'm your fated pair!" Estonia replied.

"But why?"

Me and Estonia froze in our position; did she really just asked that?

"Hey, you don't need a reason to fall in love" I spoke and she turn to me still with a shocked expression.

She released Estonia and slumps on her position "but, if you don't have a reason then what's the point? Doesn't that just mean you love me cause I'm your fated pair not because of me? You love me just because I saved you? What if I didn't and I never really met you and I'm your fated pair, it would look like you're just following your instincts because you *have* to"

I was speechless for a second, but the more I process what she said, the more I realize that she's right. She may be kblivious to these but she sure is not dumb, she's good with logic and reason and combines it to emotional things.

She's definitely right, one really needs a reason to love someone; although sometimes you don't need it. But along the way, you might need one.

"Tell me, Estonia, aside from me saving you" she looks down on her lap where her hand is resting "tell me, what if there's no reason for you to like me other than being your fated pair that falls victim to your instincts that you didn't ask..."

Seriously what is she?

"Uhhh... Well, I would still like you?" Estonia replied, nervously scratching the back of his neck.

Her expression tells me it's what she expected, seriously. Girls that want Estonia would swoon and squeal when he says he likes them. But why isn't she?

"Then, for what reason?"

"Because you're my fated pair?"

She sighs and smiled at Estonia; a weak and sad smile "okay, I get it, I think I get it now"

No, no, you don't. Why is your smile like that? Why?

Bathump

I don't like that. Is falling in love really a big deal for you?

Bathump.

Do you really want to feel the pain of love? Do you?

Bathump .

It's painful, it's suffocating. Keep your innocence and don't fall for it. Don't fall in love, it's better if you don't.

Bathump .

Why am I even trying to protect that innocence of yours? Why do I feel like protecting you as well? I'm supposed to hate you - I hate you.

Bathump.

You stole Estonia from me, the only family and best friend I have.

Bathump .

You want attention from all country leaders here by acting all cute and victim like...

Bathump .

You want their affection like any other girls. You want to have your own set of harem, I want to call you an attention whore, a flirt, a bitch...

Bathump .

I should've learned my lesson, twice. I should've leanred it by now, I've observe girls and they're all the same.

Bathump .

Yes, some of them are like you. But in the end, they fall and break and turn into the common and obvious.

Nobody is innocent forever, nobody is humble forever, no one is kind enough to give up everything they have.

Bathump .

But why is it? Why is it that the more I look at you, the more I ask myself '*is she really the same as others?'*

Bathump.

Whenever I look at you, you have this sadness in you that you mask with a smile to make everyone happy around you, I want to hate you yet I can't, something is stopping me so. Those eyes are just irritating, it gives me opposite feelings.

What are you? *Who* are you really?

I can tell, you're not just an ordinary country leader that leads their people, no. You're not.

"Ask me" my voice spoke and she turns to me.

The hatred is slowly dying out.

"Ask me if I need a reason to love you"

Estonia swiftly faced me and pouts his cheeks "what?! No way!" He

whined before turning back to *philipia* again.

"Do you have a reason... Finland?"

Finland

This time I'm sure. This time, I'm not mistaken.

I leaned close and held her hand. Estonia is clueless as to what was going on and I can see her other friends approaching us now.

"Cause you make me feel good... Your laughter is warm, your smile is warm, your voice is... Familiar" I whispered. Estonia behind me is struggling to pull me away.

"I feel happy, I feel angry, I feel sad, I feel joy... Anything, when you're there, so..." I placed her hand on my chest.

What the hell is this? This is escalating so quickly, something is definitely making me fall for her, something is making me like her. And that *something.* I can feel it if I look deep into her eyes.

It's like I'm not allowed to hate her...

"Those are my reasons... Now can you say it's reasonable?" I stare at her eyes, pressing my lips firmly as I leaned even closer.

She looks at my hand that's holding her and pressing it to my chest "yes, it seems reasonable, but I can't say I can feel what you feel..."

Thought so...

"Maappppllleeee syrup!!!!"

I immediately back away before Canada could push me off with his body; instead, he pushed Estonia on the ground, shaking him back and forth "sexual harassment! Sexual harassment!!!!" He cried.

France caught up and catch his breath, looks like he really needs to go out more "fuck! Canada! Damn it!" He yelled before walking up to us.

Everyone is starting to gather up now.

I should leave.

Standing up, I left the scene that's about to get crowded before anyone could notice me.

As I walk back to the school, I leaned on the wall in the hallway before holding my chest, heaving heavily in and out "what the hell..." I muttered as I finally realized what I just did.

I'm supposed to teach her. Not fall for it instead! Damn it! Did I finally fall victim to her trap? What the hell does she want?!

"Lovesick buddy?" I jolted and turn to my right to see russia and tethys.

I sighed and composed myself, I don't want to deal with these people "going already?" Tethys spoke and stepped infront of me.

"I don't want trouble" I said.

Tethys snorted and laughed "hey, watch your mouth, be thankful I'm quite merciful tonight" he said.

Russia walks up to me as well and examined my small form "you felt it as well?" He asked and I raised a brow.

"Felt what?" I asked.

Russia scoffs and leaned on the wall I was just leaning on "that *something* that somehow makes you weak when you look at sunshine" he replied.

So they felt it as well "what is it?"

He shrugs "don't know, but I'm sure it works against her will, I bet she doesn't even know"

"Is that what you were talking about before? You know it's impossible" tethys spoke, placing his hand on his hip "and even if she is, it doesn't work that way"

"What is it?"

Russia sighed "it could be that, sunshine..." He stares out the window that shows the west garden where everyone is now gathered and talking with her "she could be a direct descendant of Armageddon"

I think for a second "Armageddon? The first female leader?" I asked.

"It's really impossible, Armageddon only had three sons, two of them died and one of them took over and he married someone and gave birth and so on before giving birth to my father and my father and mother having me, so *I'm* the direct descendant" tethys explained, as if trying to deny the truth.

"Then care to explain her yellow eye? Sure the others have it but it is also possible that one of those son's hooked up with some random people and possibly spread the gene of yellow colored eyes, Armageddon is the only one who has it"

I'm so confused, what are these two giant leaders talking about?

Her? Descendant? Armageddon?

"Whatever rusky, I'm tired of arguing with it with you" he scoffs.

"Yeah, yeah, debunk it if you want, but I'm gonna prove it someday" Russia sternly said before walking away "oh and fish-fin" he called.

I look at him boredly "it's Finland, and what?"

He glance back at me from his shoulder "whatever your feeling when you're with her, don't think too much about it and leave her alone" he answered before finally walking on the opposite direction.

I turn to tethys who's looking at him with an ugly smirk "funny isn't it? That feeling your feeling?" He spoke not looking at me, eyes still stabbing Russia's walking form "that she can make you do her bidding with a single smile? It's so toxic I love it" he laughed like a lunatic before leaving as well.

This school, is really something...

I turn back to the window and stare at her, sitting under the tree and leaning against it's trunk.

"Descendant of Armageddon? It's highly impossible"

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11 : 25 am

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I walk inside the hallway, still contemplating about yesterday. That was so lame. I'm so lame. I wanna punch myself by how embarrassing that was, and I even did it at the west garden with Estonia, possibly some people would have seen it!

"ARGHHHHH!!!!!!!!" I crouched down and mentally slap myself for being so cringey!

It took me a few seconds to finally calm myself down and head to the garden cause I'm sure Estonia and her are already waiting.

As I step infront of the doorway, I look up to see her facing back at me talking to Estonia as he gave her a bouquet of sunflowers.

Sunflowers.

This scene looks so familiar, I've been here before. I'm sure I've been here before...

"Agh!" I jolted from the sudden pain in my head, it was throbbing "ngh!" I groaned.

I caught their attention causing both of them to look at my direction, she turns around and I'm sure. I'm definitely sure I've seen her somewhere.

"Finland?"

Finland.

That's right. *That* time, I've met her! And I can't be mistaken again, it was her...?

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I walk inside the corridor after talking to my father about me inheriting and taking over the country.

It's so stressing I need a breather.

"Amazing... Grace... How sweet..."

I stop and turn towards the garden my mother loves, her personal sunflower garden. But that can't be, no one can enter there.

That scared me, that sudden voice that sounds unrealistic stopped me for a second "maybe I need sleep.." I said to myself as I massage my temple.

I turn back again and walk back to my room.

"The sound..."

I stop again but this time, I ran towards my mother's garden and there, I saw someone.

Dress, dark as night, and head adorned with a long veil. She faces her back at me as she carries a bouquet of sunflowers.

Normally I would get angry for trespassing and taking flowers without my permission but I don't feel angry at this stranger "you, who are you?" I called and they stopped.

Slowly turning their face at me, I can only see her lips and nose, after those are now covered by her veil.

"Finland"

She knows me? Oh, of course she would, I'm going to be the country leader soon "that's disrespectful of you to call me, kneel" I ordered yet

she didn't even budge.

She giggled and nodded "okay" she said and placed the sunflowers down to bow down and spreading her skirt apart "greetings Finland, I apologize if I was disrespectful"

Cute but just because she is I won't let it slide.

"It's okay" I said.

So this is how it feels. But enough about that, how in the world did she get in? This is the most important and private area in the house, security would be strict and it'll be hard to slip in.

But even if I ask her, I'm sure she won't tell me and she doesn't seem to be a bad person.

"How did you get in here anyways?" I asked as I looked around the garden that's the same as always.

"Oh, it's quite hard to explain but. I was just sort of brought here out of nowhere" she replied while fiddling with some sort of sphere.

Brought here?

"I see, well, can you leave? It's my mother's garden I don't want anyone to come in here except me" I said, gently as possible, afraid I might sound rude.

She smiled and nodded, "of course, I'm really sorry"

As she walks towards the door, a strong gust of wind came causing the both is us to stop for a second. I shut my eyes close before opening it and when I did, I saw her face.

The strong wind made her veil float up, she had eye eyes closed as well, waiting for that strong wind to calm down. And while she did, I was staring intently on her.

"That was a strong..." Her sentence fades as our eyes locked on to each other.

Yellow... I see yellow. It's so unnatural and beautiful, I stopped breathing for a second and just stare in awe at her.

She quickly pulled her veil that rested over her head, quickly walking pass me, I stood there shock and paralyzed.

I wasn't paralyzed because of fear, I was paralyzed by how amazing it was. Her eyes were like crystals, I swear I thought it was crystals. Illuminating and reflecting me.

" P-please !"

I snapped back from her soft spoken voice " f-forget about what you saw today" she stuttered.

I turn to face her again but she's now avoiding eye contact.

" W-who are you?" I asked.

She grips her fist before taking a deep breath, "promise you won't tell anyone what you saw..." She spoke and I nodded unknowingly.

"Yeah" I muttered but enough for her to hear.

"Sunflower..." She answered.

I can't breath, my heart keeps beating loud, I can't breath!

"See you..." she said before running away.

She was so beautiful...

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I fall to my knees as I held my heart.

Philipia hurriedly came to my aid "Finland! Are you okay?" She asked worriedly; still hugging the sunflowers wrapped in newspaper.

"What happened?" Estonia asked as he careful approached us.

Philipia held my shoulders and I stare at her eyes. It's the same, it's definitely the same.

She tilts her head to the side "same? What is the same?" She asked.

She wouldn't understand - of course, what else am I expecting?

But what Russia told me yesterday, I ignored it and just let this knowing feeling spread and grow.

"Estonia" I called before he step to the side.

"Yeah?" He answered.

"I found my sunflower" I replied.

It didn't take long for him to understand what I meant "no way, it can't be her..." He shockingly said while slowly taking a few steps back.

I turn back to philipia again, eyes still concerned "do you feel ill?" She asked and I shake my head in response.

"No, I don't feel ill sunflower, I feel happy..." I sobbed as finally; I've found what I've been looking for.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry I didn't know, I'm sorry I called you names, I'm sorry if I was harsh, I'm sorry if I was cold, I'm sorry if I was such an asshole!" I cried while holding on to my chest while the other holds her hand.

"F-finland? I don't..."

"You! You came to my country before"

"Me?..."

I nodded "you were at the garden my mother loved and just like this, this scene, you - standing before me holding a bouquet of sunflower" I added "for the first time in my left I've ever felt something like this, and because of you I learned a lot of things..."

She looked confused, why does she looked confused? Does she not remember? Ahh, it hurts if she doesn't, and it will only show how much of a fool I am. But it's fine, I'm a proud fool and a proud person to say that I actually loved her.

"We spent the days in my house laughing and just helping me get over my anxiety. You helped me grow for one week and I won't be what I am if it wasn't for you!"

"Finland stop! It can't be sweetheart! What on earth are you talking about?!" Estonia exclaimed, quite upset.

Sorry, but it seems like we want the same person.

I look up at her and held both her hands making her let go of the flowers that scattered on the ground "sunflower! I'm really sorry I really didn't know! I'm really sorry, forgive me! Please..."

"Uhm, o-okay, okay Finland please don't kneel..." She said softly.

Now that I know it's her, why am I treating her differently now?

I'm such a pathetic guy...

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I sat on the floor on the school rooftop, looking for peace. But of course no such thing exist when you're in this school.

"Sunshine" Russia called behind me which I didn't even turn to face him, I didn't reply either since I just need a peace of mind for a while.

Especially what happened yesterday...

I feel Russia approach me and sat beside me near the edge of the

rooftop where the tall fence blocks the end. This is nostalgic, it used to be a railing but I guess they made it into a fence after tethys did that stunt before.

"Bad mood?" He asked and shake my head in reply "Sorry if I disturbed your uhh... Meditation"

I hummed in response and continued to sit and relax.

"Soo uh, I heard about Finland"

I sighed and turn to Russia "you heard about what he did?" I asked knowingly.

Russia nodded "yeah, everyone does now"

I turn back to the view where I can see the whole ground of the school and the soft warm breeze "it just feels weird, he used to hate me so much and now he doesn't? It confuses me"

"Of course it does" he muttered but enough for me to hear.

"It's just weird that they kept saying I saved them from the past, even though I remember nothing and I never left my country at all" I added "they kept saying they loved me because of it, because I saved them from despair, I saved them from what they hate"

He hummed in response, signifying he's really listening.

"But I just don't understand what they mean, I don't even know what love is..." I mumbled the last part "I don't understand what they mean when they say their heart races or my smile blinds them"

I turn to Russia who's looking at me intently "I don't understand when they say they loved me for no reason that I don't need a reason"

"I don't understand when they say I love you to me when the only love I can return is friendship and familial love" I swallowed a lump on my throat as tears are threatening to spill "it hurts me when I can't say the same thing and it hurts me when I know they genuinely like me and I act all stupid and insensitive..." I sobbed,

finally big fat tears streaming down my face.

"I know some of them likes me romantically, I'm aware! I just don't know how to return it I don't know how to say it... Because all my life I was taught to ignore about these things and that if someone tells me they like me not as a friend but as me..."

I wiped a tear using my sleeves and let it stay there "I must always reply with something that won't hurt them and I thought... If I tell them that I love them, but only as a friend...I thought I won't be able to hurt them!" I clenched in my chest as the heavy feeling kept pouring "I feel like a freak, I feel abnormal, I can't feel what they feel..."

Whimpering softly, I covered my face, looking away "why did it have to be me, why did they have to like someone as hollow as me..." I said through broken tears "it hurts to know I hurt them, and it hurts even more that I can't release the people who are in line for me because I don't know what love is! If only they didn't..."

I cried quietly as much as I could infront of Russia who sat there, listening to my complaints "it pains me that they can't break free from it unless I choose someone, and even if I did I'dstill hurt them...!" Gripping on to the book, a tear fell on top of it.

"I'm sorry if I really am stupid and naive, I'm sorry Russia..." I look down to the book and held it tight "I'm sorry if I'm such an insensitive friend. I just don't understand why they like me that way...why do they have to like me that way..."

There was a moment of silence before Russia stood up and dusted his pants, walking to the direction towards the door; he paused for a second and spoke "You don't have to rush it sunshine, nobody thinks of you that way, you don't have the right to tell them who to love or hate, you also have no right to tell them who to be in line. Fated pair or not, you need and don't need reasons to love..."

I bite my lower lip as I feel another batch of tears.

"You just have to let it flow, you can't dictate how it goes sunshine, you can't force it either. Tell me, do you need a reason to love your

parents as well? Aside that they took care of you and made you? What if they didn't? What if you just love them, because you really do? What if they ask you 'why you love them?' what will you answer?"

I turn to Russia, he faces me with such hurt expression "you have no right to say those sunshine. Nobody is immune to emotions, even if you're the most numbest person in the world, you aren't safe from it, so think about the other person's feelings before saying those" he said "I'm not comforting you for something like this sunshine, there's a limit to how much I care; so just be true to yourself and let it flow"

After that, Russia turn to his heel and left the rooftop, closing the door behind him as he go.

I sat there, alone as Russia's words kept ringing in my head.

He's right...

I just complained by how insensitive I was yet I was already acting insensitive too.

I'm so stupid...

I look down at the book again and flipped it's pages before stopping at one particular page.

Country leader baptism.

1st baptism: Birth.

When a country leader is born, the birthmark on the leader will fade after one month if not baptised on their territory. When it is successful, the second baptism will occur. If not baptised after one month the birthmark will fade and remain a royal city or capital city.

Second baptism: Look on the world.

Second baptism takes place after the leader has reached their child stage. It will awaken their potential and their worth for the country.

Third baptism: Skills.

The leader on their third baptism on their teen stage is where their skills that are heavily supressed by the marks will be released such as the ability, the line, and soul collision; Would be freely used.

Fourth baptism: Worth.

Fourth baptism is the decision of the land and country that will bestow on the leader if they truly are worthy.

Last baptism: Awakening.

The last baptism will ultimately allow the leader to control and lead the country. It would also unlock all their supressed skills to its full extent such as forced submission and healing (female country leaders)

I narrowed my eyes on the page and stroke my hand on the words *baptism*. Maybe, if I get to be baptized now, maybe I can finally feel what they feel.

Or is it just wishful thinking?

But I do want to try... I want to know. What Russia said really struck me, I really need to be true to myself from now on.

I gently let myself fall back on the floor and stare at the wide blue sky "hey, red" I whispered.

"*I'm here"*

"Tell Filip, he doesn't have to block the others from coming out, I'm sure he's aching to switch and feel what it is to be alive..."

"Okay..."

I hummed "thank you"

It didn't take long for my eyelids to finally gave in to my drowsiness and fell asleep unconsciously.

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< < < End of Chapter 3 : Sunflower.

> > > Coming Chapter 4 : Skinship.

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Fact 1 : Mr. UK's father is still alive

Fact 2 : Estonia is part of the "club"

Fact 3 : Ukraine changed his national flower to ***sampaguita.***

Fact 4 : Everyone texts philipia every night.

Fact 5 : Brazil has a son.

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[Sorry if this chapter took so long, there was an accident while editing soooooo I had to redo a little bit on the spot π^π]

[And sorry if it seemed nonsense and rushed]

[Also, D-kun will no longer edit uwu. Let's just say he couldn't anymore due to family drama. REST IN PEACE bish]

[Anyways, hoped you guys enjoyed this and I'll make the updates faster as much as I could]

[See you guys on the next chapter~]

[Much love~~]

Notice: publish or not

[image]

Hey guys it's me G.D, I know you're shocked right now, don't worry this is just something I've been thinking

So I have this story titled "Mandela effect" if you Google it you'll know what it means.

And it is actually the first CH story I EVER made when I first discovered countryhumans from YouTube.

And I don't know what happened why I didn't continue it? Or why I forgot about it?

But I ended up making Pangaea Academy (which I didn't expect to like go WHOSSSHHHH!!!)

So earlier I was deleting some shitty stories that I never plan to EVER show to anyone because...

Satan wouldn't even dare to read it ^^

If some of you may know I used to make smut stories, although my English and grammar was...eugh -trash- But since I live in a different country (which is a secret) I actually won in my school for the best one shot adult story.

(I know I'm amazing)

Anyways, I found this story of mine that I thought was *interesting* and quite surprised at my old self like "damn girl, dis story is lit" - for me at least.

Andddd so I decided to like edit it with my current WRITAAHHH KNUUWWLEDGEEEEEEE and my uhhh *improved?* Grammars? Cause English is not my first.

(I still live around Asia, so you can just guess which country I live

and what language I mostly speak and use.)

And it turned out pretty great, although it still feels weird cause I'm used to write philipia really innocent and just *flick* ya know? *That* innocent.

And I'm contemplating whether I should publish it or not, cause I'm still writing Pangaea Academy which I don't know when it'll end and I'm kinda aching to like let you guys read it cause I really think it's interesting

ANYWAYS! lemme know what you guys think about it; comment if you want or not I'll read all of it, don't worry

I'll probably give you guys three weeks? To like, really decided if I should or not? Cause I really feel bad

I feel bad that some of you stopped reading other story to follow my story and you know Every chapter takes about 100k or More plus words; and it takes a lot of editing so it takes a long timeeee! > <

And I make three drafts for that one chapters cause sometimes I don't like it and sometimes the story was going nowhere and I had to write another one again.

Here I'll show you an example with the recent chapter. Chapter 3 : sunflower.

All those three had different starting, different endings, different dialogues, different Povs.

(Draft 3) is actually only Finland's POV. While (draft 2) is just shit. It was soooooooo, omg. That's why I had a problem with the editing and I had to change some of them!

And it was driving me crazzyyyyyy.

But it was all worth it to know you all enjoyed it although there's still typos and shits.

The longest one I ever draft is probably from book 1 "desiderium"

where I made 5 of them just rewriting and redoing and changing different settings and different shits and one of them took 200k+ words and one almost reached 300k+ which of course, made my phone laggy while writing it even on my laptop by how many it is omg >_<

Anyways I'll see and wait for three weeks and I'll show you one part of it, the prologue and tell me what you think

Publish or not?

Cause while you wait for Pangaea you can like read this story cause I really feel bad - again for the people who stopped reading other books because of me ;-; I'm sorreehhh!!

Cause as a writer you can't focus on one thing it'll stress you out and it will make the story nonsense and it will stray you and you'll have the worse writer's block.

(Trust me)

That's what my teacher told me and it's true.

(I choose an English major so writing was really essential in my class)

Anyways, it's on the next page and enjoy...? Hehehe~ let me know by the comments mkay?

Mandela Effect : Prologue

[image]

Life is short; Is what they always say. That's why I did everything while I was still breathing.

I'm philia, a country-master.

Meaning?

I'm what you call a president but at the same time I'm the country itself. Sometimes people call us immortal leaders.

Why?

Because we don't grow old, like having wrinkles and weak, brittle bones - no.

We do get sick - yes; but we can't die unless something kills us. We can't die cause of old age, because we don't age at all.

Confusing, yes I know but. Let's say, we are born, our flags are created, only country-masters can harness the land and implement as the flag itself. We grow from infant, child, early teens, late teens, early adult, and late adult. And that's that, that's where it stops. Because as long as the people remember us, we don't die.

But like I said, it doesn't mean nothing can kill us.

Like me, I'm a country-master. Third daughter of Perla (the first pearl of the orient sea) and Kati; my papa and mama.

I'm also the youngest, because I have my older brother Gregorio del Pilar and my twin who's older than me; Martial Law.

During our time, our parents died, unfortunately. But we three lived, and together we helped our country prosper.

Of course with the help with some good old friends, my friends who

helped us changed for the better.

The world was finally in balance.

Why?

Because multiple associations gathered up in one place to knock some senses to all of us, to stop all the fightings and wars and everything bad...

And it did.

But everything became peaceful after many deaths, including my butler Davao.

Yet his death was not in vain, because of his hardships and loyalty. Everything was finally at peace.

And it didn't take long for me to follow.

I was sick, really, really sick...

I couldn't move, I couldn't sit up, I couldn't even eat properly, but the people in my house and country made sure I was pampered, they made sure I was taken care of.

Ahh, I was bedridden for months, and all I could do was stare at the ceiling and cry - praying and just wishing to get it over with.

It was painful, but my brothers made sure it wasn't, physically yes, but emotionally? No...

I was happy, overjoyed and just satisfied.

And in my final moments, I sighed one last time before darkness consumed me.

Weird, even if I can no longer feel anything, I can no longer feel my body, I can still hear kuya Greg's ugly cries and sobbing - of course I know Kuya martial is in pain too, but he doesn't like to show it, cause he knows I hate to see both of them cry, I hate to see them in emotional pain because of me.

But I guess he still couldn't contain it, because I heard him break stuffs because I finally died.

It didn't take long for all of it to fade into nothingness.

I felt cold, I felt lonely, I felt alone. I just wish I could be with mama and papa already; Davao, take me already, take my soul and take me to my parents.

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Okay, this is taking too long! Where am I? It's still dark that's for sure, but where am I?

Wait, birds chirping, warm feeling, blinding sunlight...!

Am I finally in paradise?! Mama! Papa! Where are you?!

"Mama! Papa!" I jolt up from my position, kicking the bed covers off of me.

Bed covers?

I examined it and it really is my bed cover, but why am I naked underneath? Oh my gosh! Is this what they meant "*I was born into this world naked and I will die naked?!*"

So everyone in paradise are naked?!

"Hmmm... It's too early..."

A deep, voice groaned besides me, he shifted to his position and wraps an arm around me.

Who?

"AHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!"

I jumped from the bed and pulled the covers to cover my body and quickly walked back before hitting a wall "you're naked! I'm naked?! Who are you?!" I yelled.

The man wasn't even surprised and just normally sat up from the bed, half open lidded eyes and the pillow covering his manhood (thank goodness)

"It's so early in the morning for such havoc, was I *really* that rough with you last night?"

Rough?! Last night?! What?!

"Lord, I pray to you I did not sin, I have protected my Chastity and died a virgin" I muttered while clasping my hands together, wishing I'm just hallucinating and this is just me dreaming because I've never had sexual experience in my life... Ever! And I'm at that stage where all I want is those but I didn't! I swear I didn't!

The man laughed - his laugh roared in the room "what? Virgin? Chastity? The hell are you talking about?" He hopped off the bed and I tried my best to look away from his naked body!

"Uhh, w-who are you?"

I can't see him properly but I can tell what he's doing on the side of my eyes, he was picking up his scattered clothes on the floor before halting when I asked the question.

He turn to me "did I really bang you hard? Meh, you asked for it"

I really have no idea!

Thankfully, a knock disrupted the awkward room "my ladyship? Have you woken up? We heard you scream"

I blinked a few times, processing if what I'm hearing is right.

So I'm really in paradise? Because if the person behind the door is who I think it is, then I really am!

Wrapping the blanket around me, making it seem like I'm wearing a

tube gown.

"Davao?!" I exclaimed; spreading the door wide open - and there he is. Young, healthy and very much alive "I'm really in paradise! Davao! You're alive!" Overwhelmed by joy, I couldn't contain myself and immediately wrapped him into a tight hug.

"M-my ladyship?!" He sounds confused, of course he would be, he didn't know I died not long after the world peace has finally come.

"I died too! I'm so happy! Are you here to take my soul now? Are you here to take me to mama and papa?" I asked.

Pulling myself from him with my hands still on his shoulder, he blinked a few times before tilting his head to the side "died?"

"So I really did fuck you hard"

Ah, I forgot about him. Swiftly turning my head to the man - now fully dressed; he walks towards me and hands out his hand.

What does he want?

"Payment" he said.

"Payment? For what?" I asked a bit confused... No, *really* confused.

Davao sighed and takes something out of his inside pocket from his shiny looking suit; it was a brown folder, bulging by how thick the inside must be.

"Thank you for your service" he said and the man winks at me before finally walking off.

"Let's do it again sometime" he said as he walks away.

Okay. What in the world? What in the name of all saints just happen? Why did Davao gave him a *payment* for what *service*?

"D-davao, is paradise really lustful?" I asked, shaking by how shocking this fact is.

Davao still looks at me like I'm an alien "my ladyship, are you really alright? Did something happen last night with him?"

"What did I do with him last night exactly?!"

Oh no, that can't be. Kuya martial will kill me if I did something like what I'm thinking I did with someone I'm not married to! But then again, I'm dead? So maybe...

No, no, no... Philia, get a grip girl.

Davao chuckled, taking my hand gently as he could and made me sit down on the bed again - why does the bed smell funky?

"Today is saturday, so it means it's your day where you have *sex*"

Furrowing my eyebrows, I processed what he said like I'm solving a math question in my brain.

"I what?"

"Sex my ladyship, you fuck on Saturday every week"

I gasp internally to hear Davao say the *F* word eloquently.

I'm so confused right now. Why would I?

"Ngh!"

I suddenly felt a throb; cutting me off from my thoughts. I couldn't hear Davao anymore, I couldn't feel anything except pain - the pain in my head that would seem to explode any minute!

Isn't this paradise? Aren't I supposed to be dead?! Aren't I suppose to be...

" Philia , my little twin"

I stare *at my martial; my twin with hollow eyes and body freezing. I'm tied to a cross with multiple hay grasses stacked up underneath me while one soldier holds a torch, firmly gripping it like he's anxious to just throw it and be done.*

"Martial..." My voice, barely a whisper; spoke. I want water, I'm thirsty, my throat is parched.

"You are hereby sentenced to death for fraud, incompetence and treason - wasting civilians money for gamble, self needs and corruption" Manila announced while he stood besides martial.

What are these memories?!

Ahhh , how my life ended so tragically, if only I was mature and smart, then maybe things could've ended differently. If only I did what you did.

Is she talking about me?

"Our country is falling yet you still have the audacity to buy a prostitute because you're bored? How pathetic and shameful you are, philia" he said through gritted teeth that is just full of remorse and hate...

I can't blame him, afterall. I put him to jail because of a lie that I made.

What...what are these!? It hurts!

If you're there, if you can see what I see right now. Change this life for me please, I will repent and admit to my sins.

Just make things right, all the wrongs that I did, set them right for me...

Although I apologize, that's the only time I can take you...

But you can still overturn everything, because the tragedy and messed up things I did; haven't happened yet...

Who are you?

I am you and yet you are not me... We are one but I am not one with you. I'm philia yet I am not either...

No, I'm philia! I'm philia! I'm the ***real*** philia!

I am also the real, yet I'm also the fake. I'm you from a different universe. Yet we have different fate.

Please...I beg you, set things right for me...

I don't understand what's happening... I'm so confused...

Just where am I after I died?

(Let me know what you guys think~)

Chapter 4 : Skinship

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image]
[image]

[There'll be Grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy~]

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Everything in this world is dirty.

Telephones, pens, notebooks, railings.

The very air we breath that's probably full of floating dead skin cells from different people, you don't know if some of those are landing and sticking to you and who knows what those dead skin feels came from.

It's all disgusting.

It's hard to breath everyday.

Everyday, my daily routine, is tiring, but if my daily routine is disturbed I get anxious, itchy and it drives me crazy.

I don't want to live like this, I want to live normally too. I want to go out and play - but I can't since it's **dirty** -

I want to try and eat outside too, I want to try and play to public places and experience real joy too.

But I can't; because if I do I'll faint from panic attacks.

Even if the weather is hot, I wear gloves - red gloves to cover the red stain that goes through from the blood of my chapped hands from frequent washing.

I want to be normal, I want to be like them too. I want to have

relationships too, I want to hold someone's warm hands with my bare skin too, I want to touch someone's face too, I want to pat someone's head too, I want to hug someone too, I want to kiss someone too...

But all of those - I can't do it. And just by thinking about it, just by thinking of me touching them makes me sick and disgusting.

I want to wash my hand.

"Hey Singapore! Wanna go and eat at the cafeteria?" Vietnam offers - which of course I never decline.

But eating at the cafeteria? It's too much for my stomach to take in, but I hold it in, I bare with it so that they can't know how worst this phobia of mine is.

I just want to hang out with someone like a normal person with a friend.

"What are you gonna get?" He asked; eyes glued to the lunch menu at the top.

"Chicken rice" I replied almost immediately.

Vietnam nodded and hands out his hand "payment" he said and I fish out my wallet before dropping the exact amount of price "go get a seat and I'll find you"

I turn to my heel and search for a vacant table that's enough for two people - looking left and right, I can see most are occupied, except the one at the back.

Perfect.

I walked up to it and immediately take out my trusty alcohol spray and sprayed it all over the area where I'll seat and eat.

I want to wash my hands.

I sat down and waited before Vietnam finally came with the tray of our food, he placed it down and he took his; while I took mine.

I take out my wet wipes and wiped the bottom of my plate and the plastic spoon they provided.

"Let's eat?" He asked with a smile, just ready to gobble it all up.

"Yeah" I replied before Vietnam happily ate his.

Looking down on my plate, I can't help but think - who or where this food came from or who touched it or is it even clean or edible to be eaten...

In my perspective, all the dirty area and dirty parts are covered in this ominous black moss; if I touch one of those, I'll die.

But I peek over to Vietnam who's still happily eating his, I want to be like that, I want to be normal.

Taking the spoon and spooning the spoonful of the rice, I nervously took a bite and immediately chewed.

I want to wash my mouth, brush my teeth, gurgle and just vomit everything out. It's so disgusting the black moss seems to spread all over in my mouth - I feel sick.

"Is it good?" He asked and I forced a smile while nodding.

Just bare with it, after this I'll throw this all up (like I always do) it's just temporarily; I can do this.

After what seemed to be like a million years, I finished my food and immediately stood up; ready to just throw it all up "bathroom?" He asked with a smile, sipping on to his juice box.

"Yes, wait for me here" I said with a serious tone, trying not to be rude as much as I could.

I hope he doesn't realize that I threw it all up, I just want to hang out like everybody else.

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I gasped for air as the water rinse the tiled sink. Since I can't stand public restrooms, I usually throw it all up at the sink behind the west building just near the gym and cafeteria we just ate.

I closed the tap and take my pocket size tissues before throwing it at the nearby bin.

"Whoah, that was a sight" I jolted and swiftly turn my head back where Scotland and Ireland is "did you just throw up all the food you ate?" Ireland asked.

I furrowed my eyebrows and pushed my glasses "just so you know, it's none of y-your business"

Was that rude?! Was I rude?! I didn't want to I just really think it's none of their business... Right?

"You know that's unhealthy" Scotland spoke while drinking his can of soda.

I look away "so? What if it's unhealthy?" I fiddle with the end of my tie.

Scotland raised a brow and took a step closer; three steps apart "have you get yourself checked?"

Is he referring to my phobia?

"I did, but I didn't like him so I didn't anymore"

Why does it sound like I'm making excuses not to get treated?

"Scot right' here is a doctor" Ireland nudges his elbow at Scotland.

"I know" I said, pushing my glasses on the bridge of my nose.

"He can help you sham, Scotland is a doctor of all fields, whether it be mental or not" Scotland explained which of course I already know.

Scotland glance at Ireland with a raise brow "where are you trying to get Ireland?" He asked, with a suspicious expression.

Ireland only stares at him with a huge grin that definitely explains that he's up to something.

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They sat with us with vietnam at the cafeteria - of course they sit a little far from me and more sticking close to Vietnam; which I greatly appreciated.

"This is why I don't trust you at all, Ireland" Scotland said in distraught "I don't have time for it, I don't even have time for my homeworks, now that USSR is a teacher here too"

Ireland proposed that Scotland should help me with my phobia which of course I know it'll never get treated - I've long accepted that I'll always be like this forever and that I'll never get cured.

Phobias like mine are rarely cured, so I can understand Scotland's protest.

"But Scotland, you just saw what we saw, I'm sure you want to help this poor old man" Ireland said with such pity tone that I know isn't even sincere, it was obviously sarcastic.

Vietnam sighs and stares at me "you didn't have to force yourself Singapore" he said with such worried expression.

I don't like that pity look. I'm not pathetic, I'm just... Mentally unstable.

I hear Scotland groaned and narrowed his eye towards Ireland who has the same grin "no, I'm sure Singapore can afford a professional one" he said and leans back on his chair.

As expected, my phobia is worst than the pollution.

The three of them began to discuss whether Scotland should help me get over my phobia or not, before a soft spoken voice interrupted this meeting between three countries.

"Hello everyone" all our heads turn to the owner of the voice and there - mismatched eyes and a gleaming smile, stand. She stood there while hugging a bunch of papers on her chest.

"Lotus!!!" Vietnam squealed and jumps from his seat before hugging her "I missed you!!!"

We're literally on the same school Vietnam.

Philipia smiles and pats his head, as if she's used to this kind of greeting - can't blame her, I see her all the time surrounded by clingy leaders. Even if she doesn't show it I'm sure she's suffocating and wants to have a peace of mind too, it's quite obvious.

"Hello philipia~ what brings you here?" Ireland winks at her which Vietnam replied him with a glare.

"I'm sure she's here to talk to me" Scotland said with a stern voice - sure of himself of what he assumes "I'm not used to see you without... Who was that again?" He whispered to Ireland.

"Ukraine, Canada and Estonia" Ireland counts. Scotland raised a brow and turns back to philipia.

She smiled and shake her head "it's okay, I'm used to it, anyways I'm here to give you guys these" she pulls out four papers from the stack that she's hugging "it's for the spring party" she added as she hands us one by one before stopping to me.

"Oh uhm, are you okay accepting papers like this Singapore?" She asked, hesitating.

Yes. I hate accepting papers from someone, because for me, it's full of dirty things and those black moss that only I can see is all over it.

But for some reason, there's none on this one, it's clean, it's normal.

She stands there and waited for me, slowly reaching out to take the paper. Is this really happening? I'm accepting a paper from someone who's hands I don't know what she touched?

"Whatttttt??????" Vietnam spoke, bewildered by my actions "how

bout you take mine?!" He offered his paper and in my eyes, it's almost covered in black moss.

Dirty, disgusting...

I want to wash my hands.

"No, that's disgusting" I said with a disgust expression.

"The hell? You can't touch that but you can touch the one philipia gave?" Scotland exclaimed before slamming his fist on the table and showing his marks, "you must have something to say Singapore!"

"C-calm down scotty, I'm sure philipia is one of those people whose super duper clean - ah, philipia, what did you last touched?" Ireland faced philipia while calming Scotland besides him.

Philipia thinks for a minute "hmm, I think it was the dirt? I did replanted some flowers and watered them" she answered and it sent a shiver on my back by how disgusting it is.

Yet...

I don't feel like throwing the paper, I don't feel like giving it back either; there's no black moss surrounding the paper. It's just - clean.

"It's fine..." I spoke which also shocked me.

Philipia smiled and nodded "that's a relief, don't worry, I washed my hands after it"

Bathump .

I look away "don't get the wrong idea, I just thought it was clean enough for someone like y-you"

"Ahhh! That face! That freaking face!" Vietnam exclaimed, pointing my face "stop that Singapore! I thought we were friends?!"

"S-stop what?" I asked.

Just then, arabia arrives behind philipia who's also carrying a

couple of papers "lookie here, this is a sight" he spoke with a grin "what's the occasion here?" He asked.

"Oh, it was just a shock to us that Singapore accepted the paper I offered considering he's a very clean person" philipia answered with a smile.

Vietnam faced Arabia with tears on both sides of his eyes "Singapore also does *the* face to lotus!" He cried - sobbing loudly.

Arabia chuckled and pats his head "that's fine, if it's towards philipia that's to be expected" he replied and steps to the side to me "but we also want an explanation from the man himself" he added.

I raised a brow and cleared my throat "there's no dirt" I simply replied which their face says their waiting for more "that's all, there's no dirt, no black moss around it unlike yours"

Scotland hides his marks again and leans back on his chair "that's what people like you always say, they can see this things that they call *mosses*" he spoke, placing his hand under his chin "and I hate to admit, some patient's that I did help, they have partners with them to get them over their fear of germs and such"

Vietnam faced Scotland with bewildered face "no way, so you're saying that lotus could be a potential candidate to help Singapore get over his germaphobe?!" He exclaimed while slamming his hand on the table.

Eugh, imagine the dirt on that table where his touching, if those germs get all over Vietnam he's gonna die.

Scotland furrowed his eyebrows and stares at Vietnam like he lost his mind "like hell I'll allow that" he said and showed his marks again.

Ireland sighs and rub the back of his head "geez, so overprotective"

Arabia laughed "one of the added traits of being in the line" he pats philipia's shoulder "aren't you fortunate philipia, many people cares for you"

She smiled and nodded "I have many wonderful friends"

There was a moment of silence before Scotland slumps back on his seat and Vietnam's soul just flew away.

"Ouch, *friends* that's nice" Ireland stated sarcastically.

Philipia nervously laughed, one that broke the painful silence these people are making "was I insensitive just now?" She asked.

Vietnam shot up and shakes his head "no! Not at all! You're only speaking from the heart so we were just overwhelmed - right Scotland?!"

These people are too obvious.

"Y-yeah! We were just touched, you're our... Uhh... Best *friend* afterall!"

Wow, that was excruciating to watch. Must be hard to say that word to the person they like.

Friends.

"I see" she said in relief before beaming us a smile "well, I hope you guys will attend the spring party, I'm sure Singapore will come too right?"

Now all their eyes were on me, waiting for my answer and of course my answer is obvious.

"No, I won't"

Ireland chuckled "not a party person? The spring party is fun by the way, you wouldn't wanna miss it" he said, leaning back on his chair.

I narrowed my eyes at him and pushed my glasses "there are five things why I don't" I held out my hand to them "one, it's crowded which means people will sweat which is *dirty,* two the venue and food are disgusting, who knows who touched it and what they last touched and it's *dirty,* three the dancing, which means you'll have to hold hands and such, it's *dirty,* fourth, it's loud and obnoxious it's

irritating and *dirty*, lastly it's it's very, very *dirty"*

I puff my chest out and crossed my arms and legs as I sit their for their reaction, and their reaction was speechless.

"All I understood was the word *dirty*" Vietnam spoke as he faced them.

Arabia broke a laugh and shake his head "the answer is clear, he really won't come"

Philipia's shoulders slumped "oh, that's a pity, but we shouldn't force him anyways" she said "but if it isn't a bother I'd like to offer you to make me your partner" she added which of course took me aback.

"Y-you? Partner? Nonsense, as if I would want to dance with y-you" I nervously pushed my glasses as I avoid eye contact. I'm sure it's not obvious that I'm embarrassed to hear that.

She giggled and shake her head "oh no, it's not that. I'd like to help you get over your fear by making me your partner, since you didn't decline the paper I gave you, there's still a possibility that you have a chance to be cured - well, not really cured but improve" she explained.

"Ha! As if lotus would invite you to a dance" Vietnam sticks out his tongue and shows the pink of his eye, mocking me - but it didn't affect of course, I'm mature enough not to get pissed.

"Wait, so you're saying you want to volunteer?" Scotland asked "why?"

"Singapore was kind enough to offer me once if I needed advice, and it was quite helpful; I asked for advice through text"

They immediately turn their heads back at me, glaring and narrowing their eyes; well, only Scotland and Vietnam who are doing so.

"Well what do you know, how kind of you Singapore" Arabia grins.

"Hmp! I just felt sorry for someone like her" I defend, avoiding eye contact.

Philipia smiled "if you'd allow me, please text me or call me or tell me" she said before checking the time from her phone "ah, Excuse us but, we still have to distribute these" she added before grabbing arabia on his forearm "let's go, we can't be lateeee"

As soon as they left, Vietnam slumps on his seat and pouts "lotus dragged Arabia from his forearm, I wanna be dragged by lotus too" he sulks.

I raised a brow at him "is that supposed to be a kink?" I asked.

Vietnam didn't even deny, he straight up nodded still with a pout as if it's a common thing to sulk about.

Scotland sighs "whatever, anyways you're not gonna take her offer right?"

Am I? I mean, it was the first time I ever accepted a paper from someone, let alone not knowing what else they touched. So I was still a bit shocked at myself.

But to me, when I accepted the paper from her hands; something was telling me that it's okay. It's okay to take it and I did.

I stare at my hands and closed it; maybe if I can accept the paper, does that mean I can still be normal?

"Yeah, I'll consider it" I answered which of course, Scotland replied me with a detest look like I've definitely lost my mind.

He clicks his tongue and slumps back on his chair "whatever" he said before standing up and left.

"Ah, geez, why'd you have to say it Singapore" Ireland asked.

I shrugged "she offered so I just told him the truth"

Ireland chuckled at me hopelessly "alright, it's your decision anyways" he said and followed after Scotland "ah, sorry if I couldn't

get Scotland to help you"

I shake my head, gesturing him it's fine.

He grins and waves us goodbye.

"I'm still not happy about it, cause I feel like you'll be one of us too" Vietnam muttered before standing up and leaving the place.

What is up with him?

I stood up as well and followed after him, his happy demeanor became gloomy and depressed.

Wonder what made him like that?

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7 : 45 pm

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I closed the lid of the pot of what I'm cooking before carrying my own tray, to my own room where I'll eat.

"Is that fish head curry?" I turn to the door to see laos peeking his head.

"Yeah, I made one that's enough for everyone" I said and exit the kitchen.

Laos just arrived today with Cambodia. Unfortunately, cosmos had to move room with room 1 where tethys and the others are staying - that's to be expected since his position is higher than anyone in this school.

As I closed the door behind me, I placed my tray on my table and ate it alone.

This should be okay. I'm okay, I've done this many times; isolating myself to avoid anything that's dirty, it's scary to even think of eating outside.

But then again, eating outside with everyone is better than eating alone.

I can hear their muffled voices followed by the sound of plates and utensils for eating clicking and clanking against each other. Hopefully they'll like the dinner I made, wish I could eat it with them to know what they think.

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"Mom what do you think of the food I made?"

She laughed and pats my head "I'm quite impressed Singapore, you have a talent for cooking"

A grin made its way to my lips as I puff out my chest; proud to even say I did the cooking all by myself.

"Don't let anyone tell you otherwise what do to or what not to do, as the future leader of this falling country, you'll have to raise it, lead it, and make it successful" she added.

I nodded, determined and excited to take over "don't worry! I'll make my country richer than anyone!" I giggled.

She smiled at me and nodded "I'll look over you as you raise from the bottom, all the way to the top"

She kissed my forehead after taking another spoon of the food I made.

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I sigh as I placed my spoon on my now empty bowl before taking it and washing it in my bathroom sink.

Taking off my clothes and immediately placing them in the basket, I took a shower before brushing my teeth and changing into my pajama.

I glanced over to the table at the center of the room where I placed all my school materials after sanitizing each and one of them.

This is tiring, it's taking a toll on me but I just can't help it, I can't stop myself and if I don't do what my brain is forcing me to do, I'll go mad.

I sat on my soft bed that immediately made me sick upon making contact, I stare at my chapped hands where some wounds were still bleeding and some are breaking apart again.

I sighed and flop down on my bed; staring at the ceiling.

How can people not think of the germs or anything that they touch might be contaminated? Ah, who am I kidding? I guess being normal is really nice, I want to be normal.

I'm sure I wasn't like this before, because I clearly remember I was always out in the sun, playing on the mud and even giving my own pet dog a bath.

But now I can't, and I can't remember what started it...

"You're so disgusting"

"Ngh...!" A sudden pain pinched my head, making me a bit dizzy.

This is me from thinking over things way too much. I guess there's no point crying over spilled milk.

I glance over to my phone and opened my messaging app "I'm going to regret this..." I said to myself before typing in a message.

To: Philipia
Re:

—

I accept your offer.

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{ Successfully sent }

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Saturday - 8 : 35 am.

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I stand outside the school gate; wearing my trusty red leather gloves, a white shirt under the maroon sweater and a trench coat to fight the cold spring. Of course since I'll be going outside the school I wore a surgical mask.

I texted philipia about me accepting her offer; she told me not to worry since she studied about it and I didn't doubt her intelligence - she did placed second top out of the whole academy after tethys.

So I won't be surprised if she became a doctor in just a short amount of years.

"Singapore!" I heard her call and I turn to her direction where she wore a long black skirt and a red sweater, long sleeve - tucked in it. "Sorry, I had to escape from Estonia earlier" she said out of breath, crouched down a little to catch her breath.

"It's f-fine, but I was waiting a long time and spring is still freezing for me" I said, looking away.

"I'm sorry, I'll make sure to come early next time" she said.

Cute.

"E-ehem, so anyways, after you" I gesture and she nodded.

Philipia and I walked around before arriving at the cafe she highly recommends, and of course public places like this is something I

don't like but, I'm wearing a full armor of protection against dirty stuff, so I should be good.

Removing my coat, I folded it neatly and placed it on my lap before siting down.

The waiter came to us and asked our order but I declined and they gave me a glass of water instead - which of course I won't even drink either.

"Did you bring a notebook and a pen?" She asked while stirring the spoon of her coffee.

"Yeah" I replied and take out my notebook and pen. I placed a large tissue on the table and placed my notebook there "what do I need to write in here?"

She took a sip before turning back to me "if it's alright with you, I'd like you to list all 10 things that you dislike, set for example, number 1 is just the mild stuff like holding hands or touching a doorknob before going down from mild to worse" she explained.

I took a deep breath before looking down to my empty notebook; removing the cap of the pen, I began to write and list all the things I dislike.

While writing, I can't help but feel like someone is watching us from afar - hmm, maybe it's just me overreacting.

"It's done," I said and turn the notebook to face her, letting her read what I wrote:

1. Holding the doorknob
2. Eating in public places
3. Borrowing someone's things
4. Eating someone else's food
5. Holding hands
6. Riding a two-wheeler with someone
7. Entering my room
8. Playing sports outside or at the gym
9. Picking up things that dropped

10. Kissing

"I see" she spoke as she reads it, carefully not to touch it "let's do the one that's mild first, *eating at public places*" she said.

I flinched and immediately shake my head "no way, there's a reason why I dislike them" I sternly said.

"But that's exactly the point Singapore, this is how exposure therapy works, is by making a person face their fear slowly" she explains.

I swallowed and grit my teeth. I want to run away and just accept my fate that I'll never be cured, but how can I when she looks at me with those eyes?

"Ugh, fine"

She smiled and clasp her hands "good! Let's order something then, what would you like to order?" She said and as she hands me the menu that I didn't even hesitate to take.

It shocked me and I faced her who's also surprised by my sudden action "you can touch those?" She asked.

"A-apparently I can?"

Maybe it's because she's the one giving it to me.

She smiled and clap her hands gently "at least we're getting somewhere" she cheered before a lightbulb gets to her "wait, let's eat something else"

I don't like how her eyes sparkle.

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"What the heck is this?"

It's an egg, with a chick fully formed inside! Whyyy?!

"It's called balot! It's my country's delicacies" she said.

"This? This is a delicacy? Are you out of your mind?"

She giggled and shake her head "nope, but trust me it's good" she reasured - which I'm not - before buying another one and hands it to me "It's fresh out of this heater" she said.

I stare at the egg hesitantly before taking it from her hand "this is edible?" I asked; still shocked by that fact.

I watch her take a new one and crack it open before peeling the broken shells down to the trash can "I can help you open it" she offered.

I shake my head and proceed to crack mine open - quite pathetic if you ask me too - but I was able to open it and saw the baby chick that's fully formed inside "I think I'm gonna be sick"

She stood up and smiled weakly "is it too much? Would you like to eat something else?"

"Hmp! Just because I said that doesn't mean I won't eat it! Don't belittle me"

She grins and sprinkle salt onto her palm, "take a pinch of the salt and eat it with it" she said before demonstrating it to me.

You're telling me to take a pinch of salt from her palm? That's disgusting.

I want to wash my hands so bad.

But I'm here anyways, all I have to do is step out of my comfort zone. Taking a deep breath, I took a pinch of it and sprinkle it all over the baby chick.

"Ugh..." I groaned slowly leaning it close to my mouth that refuse to open.

Philipia watches me intently, including the vendor and other people with us.

I shut my eyes close and just took a bite and chew "mnhn!"

Chew.

Chew.

Chew...?

"N-not bad..." I said with mouth full.

Her lips slowly smiled wide, eyes sparkling and just overjoyed "I'm so happy you like it!" She said as if it was the most happiest thing that ever happened to her.

But now that I was able to eat it and not feel that disgusting feeling of black moss spreading, I can't seem to stop eating it until I realize I have already finished it.

"Another one"

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"Eating in public place, but also eating an exotic food - especially people with conditions like yours - to actually eat it" she said and I crossed out the word from my notebook.

"That's it? That's all I had to do? What if I did finished all of these but I'm still not recovered?" I asked, slamming my notebook shut and putting it back inside the pocket of my coat.

"Well, you did eat 6 of them" she said which I couldn't deny cause it was surprisingly good.

Not the one with the hair, that - I cannot accept or even dare to eat.

"S-shut up, I just thought it was good so don't get the wrong idea"

She laughed and nodded "alright"

That's nice, just like Vietnam; both of them are comfortable to be with and doesn't get really offended by what I say, it's like they see right through my words.

We walk around the city more, but decided to head towards to the park where most tourist are. Walking at the bridge and watching some boats row their way beneath us.

Since I decided to eat the exotic food, we decided to eat even more street food, that's all I had to do? Wat that chick in the egg and I can finally eat street food that's even way worse than restaurants and cafe!

But while we walk; the more I notice our surrounding, I can't help but do feel like someone *is* following us.

"What's wrong?" She asked.

I leaned a little closer and look straight ahead "don't look back or don't look too suspicious, but I think someone is following us" I whispered.

She turns to me and nodded with a smile.

Without even thinking, I held her hands, intertwining it with mine before walking towards a more disclosed and less crowded area.

"You're holding my hand" she whispered which gave me a pause and turn back to her.

Wait, I am. But I don't dislike it. In fact, I kinda like it since it's warm.

"A-ah! Geez! Cause you're hopeless for Pete's sake, I just thought it would be pathetic to leave you alone" I said while avoiding eye contact.

But setting that aside, we're now alone and when you're alone and you know someone is following you, it's always a bad sign.

"I guess following these stupid leaders were worth it huh?" I glance at four strangers behind us over my shoulders.

"Robbers, so Pangaea isn't safe to people like you either?" I smirked, crossing my arms as I glare at them.

"No, we aren't from here, but we thought to give it a try ya know, since the crime rate here is below zero, so we thought to start it instead!" The Man at the middle and front - said with a menacing smile while swinging a stupid knife.

I scoff "really now? I guess you people have a death wish" I said, mocking their smile.

"It's best not to taunt them Singapore" philipia said.

"Female leaders are rare they said, so it would be nice to have one right?" The tall skinny guy besides - what seems to be their leader - said with a raspy voice.

I clicked my tongue and step infront of philipia "it's really not a good idea to do that" I said and glared at him "but thinking you could slip your way in Pangaea because you want to start a crime? Even a psychopath wouldn't even dare"

Their leader, smirked and gestures his men to us "take him down"

His men that he ordered; suddenly takes out a knife and charge at us.

Shit, I didn't think they'd actually do it here in broad daylight. But he has a knife and I can't touch him, he's gross, he's dirty, it's dirty...

"Mom!!! No!!!!"

"Singapore! Go!"

I don't want that to happen again. I can't let it happen again...

"Watch out!"

Suddenly, I was pulled from behind and philipia steps in. She swiftly and smoothly grabbed the guys wrist, twisting him to her behind and slams him down to the ground before twisting his arm that I *think,* broke - I heard the bone break.

"Are you okay Singapore?" She asked, ignoring the fact that she broke someone's arm *and* she's pinning the man down with his hand

already dislocated.

"I uh... Well"

She turn back to the men again with that same expression, as if their existent meant nothing. She turn back to me again with a soft smile "you hate to see violence right? Or maybe you just can't stand it?" She asked.

"What the fuck is wrong with this chick? Go and get her you idiots!" Their leader exclaimed when he roughly pulled one of them and pushed them to attack as well.

I turn to philipia again "let's just run okay?!" I said and grabbed her arm, but before she could answer, the second guy was behind her with his fist - about to punch.

It was just for a split second before the second guy started coughing on the ground and philipia has her fist formed "please don't interrupt, it's rude" she said calmly before turning back to me again "close your eyes first Singapore"

She held my hands that's pressed on the ground - that I didn't even notice - to my face, to cover my eyes.

But it's dirty, my hand is dirty, I want to wash my hands...

I want to wash my hands...

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It took me a couple of minutes to finish them off, luckily, the police came and arrested them.

Apparently their new people in Pangaea and illegally arrived here without a visa.

Pangaea can be the safest country, and can also be the most dangerous one. It's so powerful that hungry eyes are on it, so I wouldn't be surprised if some crimes happen here and there to unfortunate people.

And one of those unfortunate people are me and Singapore.

I made Singapore cover his eyes despite they were pressed on the ground that I'm aware he doesn't like or isn't a fond of, but I didn't have a choice so I had to do it.

I'm sure, when I broke that first guys arm, some sort of memory flashed before him; I can see it in his eyes.

And on the process, he fainted from anxiety so I had to piggy back ride him on the way back to the academy.

If only I accepted the offer from that officer but, what's done is done.

"Ngh..." I hear Singapore groan before I feel his head move around on my neck.

"Don't move Singapore, I might drop you" I said and he flutter his eyes open before looking at me.

"W-what?! Why are you carrying me?!" He exclaimed, shaking and making our walk a bit wobbly.

"Careful Singapore! If I drop you you'll get hurt" I worriedly said before he obediently behaves; it made me giggle and continue to walk after composing my balance.

He cleared his throat and spoke "w-why are you the one carrying me? I'm a man, I'm heavy!" He asked.

I nervously laugh and explained to him everything that happened and why I'm here carrying him "seriously? Ugh"

"But don't worry, you're light as a feather" I reasured.

But I'm quite surprised he isn't pushing me away or anything, since

I'm basically touching him and his body is pressed on my back.

"Sorry if we're like this but I had no choice" I explained.

"Hmp, since we have no choice it's fine, but now that I'm awake, can you p-put me down now?" He said stuttering "everyone is looking at us"

I look around and everyone is indeed looking at our direction.

"Oh, I'm sorry" I said and gently puts him down, helping him balance back to his step.

He composed himself and immediately turn back down to his hand "ah, don't worry, I cleaned it using a wet wipes from your coat" I said.

Singapore sighs and takes out the same wet wipe I used and used it again, and again, and again...

I watch him manically wiping his hand. I became worried and stop him by grabbing his hand to stop "that's enough Singapore" I said and he did.

He took a deep breath and look at me with a panic face.

Ahh, I know that look really well: you don't want to but you have to, and it's something you can't control.

I guess me and Singapore has something similar that we go through.

He looks at me and his eyes doesn't even hesitate to show me how teary it is, and it didn't take long for him to give in.

"Why can I touch you and I can't on others? Why do I don't slap your hand away? Why do I do everything you say?" He sobbed and I looked down; still holding on to his hand.

"I want to be normal, so I thought you could... That's why... I thought"

Singapore must've been scared... I should've protected him even

more.

I removed my hand from him and fiddle with my thumbs "I'm sorry if I couldn't and just made it worse..." I muttered "I wanted to help you, because I know how you feel"

Singapore takes off his glasses and wipes his tears "understand me? What is it that you understand of me?" He asked.

I firmly pressed my lips together and spoke "because I'm someone who doesn't know common sense, I'm someone who can't feel what's common, I'm someone who has no emotion for something..." I muttered the last part.

Singapore turns to me "let's end today, I'll call you or something if I change my mind" he said before walking faster than me back to the academy.

I sighed and crouched down a little, hissing from the pain the men gave to me earlier "I messed up..." I said to myself.

"I guess I'll ask Scotland for help afterall"

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Sunday - 9 : 45 am

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I stand infront of my door, woken up by someone knocking on my door "what the...?"

It was philipia who came with Scotland and Ireland behind her, but there was something about her that's different, was I really harsh to her yesterday? Should I apologize?

"L-look, about yesterday I..."

"Shhh, just follow us" Scotland said and gestures me to the living room.

Ireland looks at me with a hopeless expression "good luck" he said and followed behind Scotland, leaving me and philipia by the door.

"It should be me who should apologize, but trust me, this time I'll make sure to let you feel normal"

Why are you apologizing? Even though it should be me; I hated myself for hesitating to reach out to you, to help you. I was stronger and I'm the man. Yet, you protected me instead.

The look on your face yesterday says it all, nobody helps you and you're used to helping yourself. Does nobody, reach out to you? Nobody comes to your aid? Is that why you have a smile on your face even though inside you're hurting?

I want to be like you too, I want to face my fears with a smile too, I want to fight too.

Geez, I'm so hopeless.

I grabbed her hand from behind as I follow her towards the living room "philipia..." I called.

She stopped and turn back to me "yes?"

I want to be like you, teach me how to be like you.

"I'm sorry t--"

– Suddenly, a sudden urge of overwhelming desire and pressure fell upon us both. We fell to our knees as our marks begun to glow.

No way. No way...

"Ahh..." She slightly moans while trembling on the floor.

Ireland and Scotland came to our aid but as soon as they tried to touch us, the marks glowed even harder and sends an electrifying pain to them.

"Ah! What the fuck?" Scotland hissed in pain as he held his throbbing hand - same goes to Ireland.

"Shit! What the hell? I thought Estonia was her fated pair? Why..." Ireland spoke in shock and confusion as he stared at the both of us "why the hell are you two a fated pair as well?!" He exclaimed.

I can feel my veins and heart throbbing with every beat. It doesn't hurt but it feels weird and disgusting; and all I could ever think of is one person.

I need to touch her.

I need to have her.

I need her...

I need her...

I need her heat...

Her body calls for me.

It's calling for me...

I must quench our thirst...

"Agh!!..." Suddenly, Scotland and Ireland held me back by stepping on my back and pinning me down. I'm going insane, I have to touch her, or else we'll both die!

"What is going on?!" Cambodia exclaimed as he got out of his room to see us at the lounge "Singapore? What is..." His eyes trails down to philipia not far from us, on the floor, trembling and drooling, face flushed and body curled into a ball as the intense pressure is taking over her.

"Get someone! Call Estonia!" Ireland called.

"No! Not Estonia!" I yelled which took them aback. Not only am I disgusted by two men on my back, pinning me down and touching my hand, body pressed on the floor and who knows what germs is crawling here! I'm more pissed they're going to add another problem.

"If Estonia comes he'll be affected too! Ahhh!" I gritted my teeth as the pressure kept building and my mind is going crazy.

I just need to touch her! Why won't they let me!?

"I'm not taking any chances!" Scotland argues which of course made me even more pissed.

"If he comes and get affected, it's like you're trying to unleash a hungry dog to a vulnerable meat" I glared "just trust me! Or else we'll both go insane, this is no joke!"

They turn to each other before stepping away from me "I just have to connect our marks... That's all, otherwise I won't be able to control it..." I forced my heavy body up, crawling towards philipia, reaching for the nearest parts of her body; her legs.

I crawled and as our marks starts to connect, I kissed her right knee as the intense pressure finally eases down.

Fated pair, marking compatibility – is crazy...

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Friday - 11 : 30 am

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It's been a few days after that incident. Although they still couldn't tell me why I have two people as my fated pair - they couldn't believe it but, it's really there; I was both fated pair to Estonia and Singapore.

But aside from those, I was able to help Singapore improve his germaphobe, he started to improve after finding out that we're a pair. And of course, I was used as a partner for him and it was a success.

"Here!"

I turn to the direction where Singapore is no longer wearing a glove and is playing a football with Spain, cosmos and Vietnam.

It makes me happy that he can at least feel what it is to be normal and alive, Scotland was determined to cure him even just a little to avoid me and him to get partnered any longer.

I guess Scotland can be a caring person when he really loves someone like Singapore, it makes me happy.

I watch Singapore catch the ball from his chest and kicked it to the goal before jumping and cheering for himself, followed by a group hug with Cosmos and Vietnam.

I walk over to them and Spain was the first to see me "are you guys having fun?" I asked.

Spain laughed and nodded "yeah, Singapore can be a great guy to play with" he said "beat me a lot of times, that's new" he chuckled as Vietnam came up to us.

"Lotus! Did you see me make a goal earlier!? Was I good? Did I do good?" He asked while there are sparkles in his eyes.

I giggled and replied "of course, it made me proud, good job Vietnam"

Vietnam blushes and swoons "pat me please!" He asked - he's so cute. I nodded and pats his head as he squeals from my touch.

"Maybe playing sports with this helmet was a good idea, I can hit the ball with it without feeling pain" cosmos came up behind us with a towel over his neck.

"Don't you sweat inside that helmet?" Spain asked.

Cosmos turns to him "I do, but it's air-conditioned inside" he answered.

"Whoahhh, I want one" Vietnam said in awe.

"Sure, it's 999,9999,999 G." He replied and if course, it felt like my wallet was already crying from that price - does that price even exist?

As the three of them began to talk, I look over to Singapore who was washing his hands to the nearby sink and wipe it dry with his handkerchief before patting the back of his neck.

I walk over to him and tap his shoulder "I'll do it" I said which he immediately gave me his handkerchief. I spread it and slowly insert it in his back before fixing it a little more.

"T-thanks, don't get the wrong idea that I liked it, I just thought it was helpful" he defend while looking away.

I smiled and nodded "of course"

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"Hey Singapore! One more!" I glance over to Spain who gestures me the ball.

"Sure!" I yelled back before glancing back to philipia "I'll play for one more" I told her.

She nodded and gave me a wet wipes, gently cleaning my - almost healed hand - she crumpled the used wet wipe and takes out an ointment before dabbing some on my chapped area.

After that incident with philipia that seems to escalate so quick, life has been easy sailing, it's like walking on the clouds, each steps is light, each steps sends serenity.

And it's all thanks to Scotland, Ireland and her; philipia. I can see how determined she was to help me, because we went through the same thing, we didn't feel normal.

But it's all good. Everything has been good...

"Hey, philipia" I called while she closed the lid of the ointment.

"Yes?" She answered, looking up to my height with her mismatched eyes.

"Don't assume I l-like you or anything okay? But, remember the ten things you made me list down?" I asked.

She tilts her head to the side and nodded "ahh, yes, don't worry I think you've completed it mostly"

"Yeah, that, I did complete most of them and I want to complete one of them now" I said, scratching the back of my neck.

Here goes nothing.

"Which one?"

All the things I couldn't complete yet was.

Riding a two wheeler with someone.
Eating someone else's food.

And...

Kissing

I took a deep breath and peeked over to Spain, cosmos and Vietnam talking - but I'm sure they can see us.

"I'll show you and I can prove, I can do it" I said before bending a little to her height, leaning close to her face before our lips are just inches away.

Ahh! No!!! Lotussss! Singaporeeee nooooo!!" Vietnam yells as he ran towards us, throwing the ball in the air.

But just one more step, to finally close it all off.

I quickly ran as fast as I could away and pulled Vietnam before he could even arrive towards us. "C-come on and let's just play!" I insisted before Spain held my head while gripping it.

"Agh!?! No! Let me go! What did you do?! Did you whispered something or - " he gasped "YOU KISSED LOTUS!? how dare you! Ahhhh!!!!!! Lotussss!!!!" He cried while my arm is still around his neck since I pulled him away.

"Oy... " Spain called which I look away. Normally I would slapped his hand but, it's fine. Even if I'm not fully healed, I can finally do the things I've always wanted to do. "The hell did you do that?!" Spain exclaimed forming a fist while I released Vietnam who is sobbing and crying on his chest.

"Ahhhhh, spainnnnn he kissed lotuss!!!!" Vietnam cried.

I can feel my ears getting red as I glance back at them from my shoulder "that?..." I dribbled the ball first before dropping it and it bounces on the ground before I catch it with my feet "that was just what you call skinship"

Even if I'm not fully healed, at least I can feel normal. I can feel what it truly means to be alive.

Not only did I discover myself to actually get out of my shell.

I also found my fated pair, how lucky I can be...

"Like hell it's *Skinship*!" Spain argued and pulled me by my collar while Vietnam is now crying besides cosmos who's patting his head.

Everything in this world is dirty.

Telephones, pens, notebooks, railings.

The very air we breath that's probably full of floating dead skin cells from different people and you don't know if some of those are landing and sticking to you and who knows what those dead skin feels came from.

It's all disgusting.

But lately it's more easier to breath - It's much easier to breath than before...

"Why are you blushing if it's just skinship?" Cosmos asked monotonously.

"Stupid! I'm not blushing, sheesh!"

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< < < End of Chapter 4 : Skinship

> > > Coming Chapter 5 : It's so loud in a quiet room.

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Fact : Scotland is always watching over philipia.

Fact 2 : Five states will be attending.

Fact 3 : Brazil's son is adopted.

Fact 4 : Egypt's Father is alive.

Fact 5 : NATO and ASEAN will be professors.

Fact 6 : Mr. Pangaea's father (Kenorland) Once visited a country.

Fact 7 : France met a woman named dame and named the famous church "Notre Dame" after her.

Fact 8 : Kati was a leader of a secret club.

Fact 9 : Capital Cities (secretaries) memories are not and NEVER removed.

Fact 10 : You're beautiful and worthy to be loved cause I love you >\ \<

[Hey guys, it's me, hope you enjoyed this chapter although for me it felt strange, trust me. I made five drafts already and I still don't know what's missing but I edited the one that sounds about right]

[Sorry if it's a little late too and a little short only about 800+ words]

[But I did enjoy writing this and I get to study more about germaphobe - thanks Singapore, you made me feel smarter -]

[Anyways, I've been reading the comments about the story: Mandela effect. And maybe I might do publish it hehehe]

[See ya guys on the next chapter~]

[Much love ~]

Chapter 5 : It's loud in a quiet room

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy ~]

[A/N: To make it less confusing, Iran is deaf and isn't mute, there's a difference, he can speak but can't hear; although he can talk, his pronunciation is a bit slur, although he knows what he's saying since he wasn't born deaf, he just *became* deaf. Got it? Also, whenever Iran is saying, he is doing a sign language (same goes for cosmos) hence they're dialogues are like this *"they talk in sign language"* **okeh?**]

What does the world sound like again?

What does cicadas sound like again?

What does trucks, cars, vehicles, any machines - sound like again?

What do voices sound like again?

All these sounds, all these things, I can no longer seem to remember. I can no longer picture how one thing sounds like again.

Sometimes, I feel like I'm being left out, sometimes, I feel like I'm left behind, people are moving forward, while I – I'm left alone; behind.

Whenever I walk around the school, their lips move, speaking and talking, their voices that comes out naturally to form words.

I can no longer determine it, I can no longer hear it without focusing. I can't hear but I can read what they're saying - that is if

they talk slowly and clearly.

While walking, I felt a tap on my left shoulder; catching my attention I turn around to see cosmos with his usual helmet.

I smiled and made a sign language that says: *Good morning, cosmos*

He replied me with a sign Language as well: *Mornin'*

I grinned and walk alongside me. As we walk in the hallway, I can feel multiple footsteps from different students. Although my hearing is absent, my sense of touch, and sight is still present; everywhere I go, there are certain vibrations - from the walls, things, floors, everywhere.

"Did you hear about the upcoming spring party?" I asked.

[A/N: They're talking in sign language okay? Mind the fonts]

"Yeah, I did. Are you going to attend?"

I nodded and signed *"I'm going because red rose is going"*

Cosmos nodded and pats my head. I look over to the bulletin board and saw the poster for the spring party; I don't think about what's gonna happen there all I could think about is the dress red rose is going to wear.

Just imagining it gives me a smile.

"What do you think red rose will wear?" I asked with a little tilt of my head, a sign of wondering or question.

Cosmos's simply shrugged and lifted two fingers and swirls it on top of his head; a sign of *"beats me"*

I giggled and just jumped in excitement. I really can't wait what she's gonna wear.

As we continued walking, I glance down to the window from the second floor; where it gives the full view of the main garden where red rose is trapped between Canada and Estonia on both side.

"There it is again, seriously, if she's troubled why don't she just stop coming to the main garden knowing they always corner her?" Cosmos signed at me.

I agree, I know red rose might be troubled and annoyed already. Why does she keep going there? Oh.

While watching them, I noticed she's holding a bunch of papers - the paper that she distribute for the spring party.

I giggled and turn to cosmos, pointing at the papers *"she's doing her job and minding her own business, I don't think it's her fault she attracts bees"*

"Ah!" I felt my voice vibrate from my sudden voice that came out of reflex.

"Should I yell?" I asked.

Cosmos nodded and gestures me to; *go ahead.*

I took a deep, deep breath before yelling her name "RED ROSEEEE!!!!"

I depend on the vibration that I feel that goes stronger and stronger; signifying my voice was probably loud.

I'm deaf, not mute. There's a difference, I can talk but can't hear, although my words are a bit slur, aside from it, my senses are good.

When I yelled, the other students from the hall and near the main garden turned their heads towards my direction.

I waved and smiled when I saw her turn to me as well - she flashed me a smile before canada took this chance to pull her away from Estonia - who then stomps his feet and tried to follow but fails to do so, since he can't see and ended up falling on the ground.

That must've hurt.

Luckily, Finland came to his aid and helped him up before telling him how Canada snatched red rose away.

Ahhh, she's surrounded by powerful and big leaders, can I even count myself as worthy to like her? Am I even allowed too?

Why did I even liked her anyways? For some reason, most people here likes her - aside from her cute and pretty face. There's something more about her, I can't tell if it's her sex appeal or maybe her innocences that attracts us; I just feel like there's more than meets the eye.

I felt a tap on my left shoulder and turn back to see cosmos pointing sir jack - who's behind us.

I watched sir Jack's lips move that tells me: *Don't yell at the hall.*

I grinned and stick out my tongue, attempting to act innocent since I can't hear.

He raised a brow and sighed, letting it slide. He turns to cosmos and tells him to: *keep an eye out on him will you? I saw how you allowed him to yell, what if Mr. Pangaea heard it?*

I shiver a little when Mr. Pangaea was mentioned. Never, ever start an argument with a continent leader.

We bowed slightly to sir jack as he left, I turn to cosmos who gestures me to go back to the room - which of course, I nodded and followed.

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405 - 10 : 30 am.

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I sit in class as I intently watch the teachers mouth move to know what their talking about, thankfully, even if I can't hear I can catch up to the class and still have good grades that's above average.

Halfway through I got bored and decided to write anything on my notebook or even doodle on the both top sides and bottom sides.

I wonder what red rose is doing? I've never been alone with her for more than an hour, she's always with her friends and big country's.

Whenever I look at her, there's always this certain loneliness she hides. I don't think she's even aware she's lonely or maybe she does and she hides it well.

When I first met her I almost felt like I was in a long trance - I can't help but wonder why I suddenly liked her to the point I think of her everyday.

There's really something that really tells me, that I should and *absolutely* not hate her. Or else I'll regret it.

At least that's what I feel, but why? There has to be an explanation. It's not a skill, or maybe it is?

I jolted a little when I felt strong vibrations from my surroundings; I look up to see the teacher already leaving and my classmates standing up and packing their books and notebooks.

I fish out my phone and checked the time *11:35 am.*

It's lunch! - oh right, cosmos can't join me today, should I invite someone else? Ahhh but I'm sure everyone has their own partners or group of people to eat with. Cosmos hangs around with me cause he said I'm quiet and not annoying.

I sigh and take out my lunch box that is inside a green duffle bag.

Should I try eating at the rooftop? I don't want to eat at the cafeteria alone, it'll look awkward.

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Pangaea Rooftop - 11 : 38 am.

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I peeked at the door and saw a couple of students hanging out here and eating as well. It's a good place, clean and good breeze but - the students looked a bit uncomfortable and tense.

I look around more to see North Korea, Spain, China, Russia, Japan, America and Tethys gathered in one area of the place. They were on the floor, eating and talking while Tethys and Japan are leaning on the tall fence while playing.

No wonder the students looked a bit uncomfortable, I would be uncomfortable if America is there. Tch, look at that idiot.

I rolled my eyes and decide to eat somewhere more less crowded; and there's only one place that I know is less crowded.

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Dorm area (1) Main plaza.

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At the dorm area, there's a few students lingering at the plaza that the school just finished making. And since there's no sign of a single leader, I'll make this my lunch spot from now on.

I sat on one of the bench that's near the fountain at the center of the plaza. I opened my lunch box and began eating quietly.

While eating, I saw Arabia walking towards the fountain - about to sit down, but he saw me and decided to sit with me.

He waved while carrying his own lunch - on what liked like a store bought.

He smiled and his lips moved: *Can I sit down here bud?*

I nodded and moved a little to the side. He grins and struggled a little to open his lunch before finally succeeding and gobbled up his food that I don't know. - although it looks familiar.

I turn to my own food and ate it before I felt him tap my shoulder and spoke: *Where's cosmos? I always see you with him.*

I placed my spoon down and gave him a sign: *He's at the office with Mr. pangaea.*

Arabia looked perplexed on what I gestured - I forgot, not everyone knows sign language here. The only people who can understand was red rose, cosmos and Singapore.

I cleared my throat and tried my best to speak clearly as I could "cosmos. Mr. Pangaea. office"

His face perked up and nods before saying: *Ah, I see, must be because he's the son of a world leader.*

I nodded and continued eating.

The rest of the lunch was quiet and just a short conversation between me and Arabia since he can't understand what sign language is and I'm insecure of my pronunciation since I don't talk much.

I closed my lunch box and placed it back inside the duffle bag, pulling the strings on opposite directions before it firmly closed.

I turn to Arabia who's bent down a little while drinking from a water fountain besides us.

I'm not really close with Arabia, but from what I know; he's the only one who isn't into red rose the way the others are into her.

But I highly doubt it'll last long even if he has a girlfriend. But knowing arabia, he isn't a bad guy and he's a pretty chilled guy, an ideal brother-motherly type.

He stood up straight and sighed before wiping his lips with his sleeve from the excess water, dripping.

He turns back to me and spoke: *let's go.*

As we were about to leave the plaza, something moving caught the corner of my eyes. I turn towards the wooden area that's on the opposite side of the plaza - I can tell Arabia just asked me w*hat's wrong* since I stopped.

I turn to him and pointed the direction where I saw something.

He followed it and squinted his eye a little - *"what is it?"* He asked.

I shrugged and gestures him to check it out. He nodded and followed after me.

We entered the wooden area and at the distant, I saw a pair of legs behind a huge tree. Arabia saw it too and we both thought it was someone who's in trouble or someone who fainted.

But it wasn't.

Instead, we found a beautiful lady, sleeping peacefully on the grass that seems to envelope her small, petite form.

I turn to Arabia who spoke: *it's just philipia, that scared me for a second there.*

I chuckled since I felt the same way, my heart is still calming down after that assumption.

I turn to Arabia again and said "red rose. Tired. Sleeping. Why?"

He shrugged and crouched down a little to brush her cheeks softly *"probably tired because of the spring party or her club, or maybe..."* I leaned a little closer if he continued what he said, but he didn't.

Maybe what? She's tired from what?

I crouched down besides him and examine her her sleeping face. Even if she's asleep she still looks pretty. Her eyelashes are so long

and her lips is plump and kissable.

Ahhhh! I'm tempted!!!

But I shouldn't take advantage of someone sleeping. But aside from her pretty traits, I can see her eyes are a bit swollen.

"What else. She tired. From?" I asked as I turn to Arabia.

He didn't look at me and just stared intently at red rose *"probably because she's tired from the overwhelming people around her everyday, sometimes it's stressing her I can tell"*

Ahhh, did he mean when *those* maggots who's always clinging onto red rose?

Poor red rose, she can't even get her personal space and solo time for herself. Cause wherever she goes there's always someone with her and she can't decline them since she's too good for this world.

But I wonder, if you ask me, there's something else stressing her out.

Arabia taps my shoulder and spoke: *You noticed she's stressed about something else too?*

I nodded.

Arabia chuckled and sat down on the grass, leaning on to a different tree *"she said she wanted to know how it feels to love romantically"*

I sat down on the grass as well with my knees close to my chest and my chin on my knees; my eyes are focused, trying to get what Arabia is saying without a single sound and just depending on the movement of his lips.

"Whenever she's with those guys who are all assertive and expressive, she can't quite tell what they mean and just gives them an immediate answer: for short, she friendzoned them all"

We both laughed, glancing back to the sleeping beauty besides us.

"I told her it's fine, don't rush - but she can't help but feel bad, knowing her words hurt them in some way, she doesn't know if they don't want to be friends with her or maybe they just want something more than a friend; of course she doesn't get it so it confuses her a lot, it makes her feel left out"

Left out? You feel the same way as I do red rose?

"Philipia isn't dumb, she's just naive on things like this so she's trying her best to be better but she doesn't know where to start when she's missing one emotion"

Missing one emotion...

I glance over to her who's still sleeping. Now it gives me a new perspective of red rose; she may be smart, strong and beautiful, no matter how perfect she looks on the outside, no matter how she is the embodiment of perfection, ideal and everything positive - deep down, she's still a country leader who went through a lot, a country leader who also has a dark past. No matter how she is, she's still a human who makes mistakes and has flaws.

But because you're so special I forget that you have problems of your own too, and that you still have many things to learn.

Everything happens for a reason, and I'm sure there's a reason why, there's something in her that blocks her from loving. Either she didn't experience it - even if it's parental or friendship - or maybe she experienced something that made a huge impact on her that causes her to defend herself from doing so again.

I sigh and shrink between my shoulders before speaking "if only she can have a peace of mind and worry less, maybe she can have a rest from this messy place"

I hope I didn't mispronounced or slur a little.

I turn to Arabia who has this distant smile but agrees with me, *"I guess she was taught not to say no at some point of her life, she really attracts weird people"*

I nodded before fishing out my phone; checking the time. *12 : 34*

pm.

I sighed and placed it back before I turn to Arabia who's already sleeping while sitting on the grass and leaning on the tree.

The breeze is strong here too, the shade of the tree is also relaxing, being beneath the nature like this reminds me of my childhood and the early days where technology wasn't a thing yet... And where war never started yet.

I leaned back on the same tree that red rose is beneath before feeling my eyelids getting heavier and heavier.

Didn't I just wished to spend time with red rose even if it's just a short while? Is someone really fuffiling that small request I have? How peculiar.

Everything can't be just coincidence...

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I opened my eyes where I'm greeted by a pitch black sky and clouds gray like the smokes, the air was hard to breath and the ground beneath me is covered in blood, bullets and dead bodies.

"Sir!" My soldier yelled which I immediately responded by turning back to him.

"Your report!" I yelled and he began to tell me what had happened of the defense at the east and west, the move of the enemies and the count of kills.

I gripped on to the gun I'm holding as I feel rage boiling in me - unforgivable. They used the dead bodies of my soldiers to taunt me more for a fight.

How dare he...

"Execute formation 6..."

The soldiers eyes widen for a second before nodding; knowing we have no more option to choose. If we can't win, might as well die trying to defend and protect my country.

He saluted me and ran off before I went to the opposite direction to aid the other soldiers already at their limit.

It's hard to breath with this thick smoke and ear piercing sound of guns.

"Formation 6!" I ordered - their heads turning back to me "Medics! Take the wounded! those who still have strength do what I said and keep firing!"

The war felt like it had been going on for eternity. Until my men were decreasing rapidly - we can't win against their weapons, we can't win this can we?

While I was fighting off an enemy, I was shot on both shoulder and fell on the ground, coughing a little and tremble from the foreign pain.

"Sir!"

I hear my soldiers call out to me, their desperate tone was on the top, I'm their last hope, their depending on me, they need me I can't die here.

A shadow looms over me and there, I saw a pair of eyes glinting and lips smirking, clearly enjoying the view he sees.

"How pathetic" his accent was deep and just irritating "should I just finish you off and be done with it?" He asked as he pulls out his gun and points it at me.

I gritted my teeth, sweating intensely as bullet sizes would drop from my forehead "be down with it, I'd rather die defending my country than give up to a trash like you... You don't belong here! this is my country! And I make the laws here!"

There was no pain but there was a sound - a sound of flat line, a line that seems to shatter my brain and vision for a second. Their voices were beginning to get muffle, and the sound of the war slowly decreased.

He shot the ground but the bullet bruised my right ear, causing my

eardrums to pop.

I wheezed as I forced myself to look up to him, not even trying to lay my head low. I have pride, I have self respect, and never will I ever bow down to a man like him.

"Oops" he said, the only hearing that I can use is my left ear. But of course he didn't even spare it and shot it, causing that flat line to grow louder and louder.

I fall back and watched him slowly point the gun at me; but before he could even pull the trigger, he stop and glance up ahead.

His smirk grew even wider as delight was visible in his eyes.

His lips moved but I couldn't hear it anymore, I can't hear anything anymore other than that ear piercing flat line.

He turn to his heel and it looks back to his soldier who rejoiced ; raising his gun, his men followed and cheered.

I look back to see one of my men, waving a white torn flag, signifying that they surrendered - they surrendered to save my life.

These idiots...

Fat tears were flowing from their eyes, wounded and uniform heavily drenched in blood - even if they are badly wounded they still made their way towards me and helped me get up.

They all sobbed and just circle around me, kneeling on the ground.

These idiots really, I don't know if I should be angry or just leave it at that.

I could no longer hear them but I can tell, they're apologizing.

Ahhh...

Has the world ever been this quiet?

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I opened my eyes and saw red rose and Arabia still asleep on the same position they were on earlier.

What a weird dream. It felt realistic.

I fish out my phone and checked the time *3 : 20 pm.*

My heart dropped for a moment; did we really just skipped half of the day to sleep?

It feels so weird to skip a class, I jolted up and panicked a little, and by panicking I caused a bit of noises that awoken Arabia.

He yawned and rub his eyes, adjusting his sight to the sudden light before speaking: *what time is it?*

He turn to me and immediately checked his watch; I expect him to panic but he just sighed and leaned back again.

I internally screamed, grabbing his shoulder, shaking him back and forth.

"Calm down, I'm sure they'll understand, besides it seems this is our first time to skip class"

I furrowed my eyebrows and massage my temple; he's hopeless but he's right - I glance back to red rose who's still heavily asleep.

Looking back to Arabia, we decided to just wake her up.

Tapping her shoulder lightly, she didn't budge so I shook her lightly, enough to just wake her gently.

Her face twitch and she mumbled something before looking up to me. Her mismatched eyes were somehow brighter than they were.

Her half lidded eyes tells me she's half asleep and still processing what's happening, but she slowly sat up and rubbed her eyes, some pieces of grass were even sticking on to her cheeks and leaves on her uniform.

I snorted and giggled before removing those, she turns to me again and blinks a few times before speaking: *Iran*?

I nodded and clapped before signing to her *"Did you sleep well?"*

She nodded and sign back as well *"did you guys sleep here too?"*

"Yep!" I replied with a proud grin.

She turns to Arabia and greeted him.

After waking up and back to our senses, we got out of the wooden area and went back to school where some students were already leaving.

Of course on the way, we bumped into Finland and Estonia who's also on their way home now.

I didn't really pay much attention to their conversation or even bother to know what they're talking about since I was focused onto red rose who's being hugged by Estonia.

He kept talking and just spouting something that I don't care to know, and red rose just stood there who looks drained already.

Poor her.

Finland and Estonia decides to get back first since red rose and Arabia went to the teachers office to discuss about what to do with the party while I went back to my room.

When I arrived, it was already empty, the chairs were arranged neatly and back to where they were, and on the window was cosmos, he was sitting on the window frame while looking outside.

If a normal person comes in, they'll think he's gonna jump.

The sunset has a clear view from our room, so I guess he's captivated by the beauty of nature.

He did lived outer space (like a real life alien) so I can't blame him.

I knocked gently that catches his attention and it did, he slowly turns to me and faced me before signing *"where were you? Your bag was here but you weren't"*

I grinned and puff out my chest, like a child ready to brag to his mother about something. I replied him with a sign *"It's a long story, I'll tell you on the way"*

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Dormitory - 4 : 25 pm

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I told cosmos everything how me and Arabia slept in the wooden area with red rose half of the day and how amazing and relaxing it felt.

"What? That's all? That makes you happy?" He asked and I nodded in joy.

He shakes his head *"really, you're hopeless"*

I laughed and agreed.

I really am...

"Hopelessly in love..."

We both stopped, both shocked and both surprised on what I just said. My expression was still smiling - smiling a hollow smile that says 'what-the-hell did-I-just-said.jpeg'

I can tell cosmos was making a weird expression under that space helmet he has, he raised his hands and signs *"what? In love? You're in love? What in the world is that?"*

I furrowed my eyebrows and tilt my head *"I don't know...?"*

"What do you mean you don't know?"

"I mean, I do have a crush on her but I can't say I love her! It just came out"

"And you even said it"

I shrink between my shoulders and signed *"I guess...?"*

Why did I just say that? Why would I say that? I have a crush, that's all, but not love - it's not love. I sigh and massage my temple.

"Maybe it's just me: confuse"

Cosmos sighed and pats my back *"maybe, it's because you're new to it"*

Yeah, maybe I am.

Cosmos and I arrived back to our own room, sadly, cosmos was moved to room 1 with the other higher countries.

And in exchanged of him was Cambodia and Laos; they're very fun people and I feel comfortable with them.

While walking to my room, I saw Greece coming out of his room that is on the opposite side to ours.

He walked out with his pet owl resting on his forearm before our eyes made contact, he smiled and greeted (of course I can't hear it)

"Hello Iran"

I smiled and replied a simple sign language of *"good afternoon"*

Greece seems to have understood and walked the opposite direction towards the elevator.

That's nice, some other leaders can understand, makes it easier for me.

As I got to my room, I saw Singapore sitting on the sofa, reading a book with gloves off.

That's right, thanks to red rose, he only used his gloves sometimes now; unlike before where he would wear it all the time. Although he wears it when in public but from time to time he doesn't.

He turns to me and spoke: *Where were you? I heard you skipped class.*

I jolted and shake my head on my defense *"I didn't! I swear! I fell asleep and didn't notice the time"*

Singapore raised a brow and points the kitchen *"there's food there if you're hungry, I made dinner now and I already ate as well"*

I smiled and nodded before walking to my room to change into something comfortable.

As I was about to leave my room, I saw my phone's screen pop up and showed me a notification.

I picked it up and pressed the one new message.

From: Red Rose🌹
Re:

—

Thank you for accompanying me today, no wonder I felt at peace and safe because there were two kind people to join me in the dream realm.

Tell me if you need something to help with, I'll do my best to offer your kindness back.

—

I giggled and held my phone close to my chest. My heart is beating like crazy and my ears are somewhat warm, why does her message make me so happy already?

Why does her simple message that contains such pure sincerity and appreciation make me so happy?

I tap on my phone to reply a message, my fingers quicker than lightning as the words that I typed didn't even take me a second to

think.

To: Red Rose🏵
Re:

___

*You're welcome red rose, I just hope you had a good dream. But I will take that offer and I'll tell you right away if I have one ^^*

___

As I sent it, I can't help but feel butterflies in my stomach just swirling and in havoc.

I took a sharp deep breath and just flop down on my bed and muffled my scream that just suddenly built up inside my throat.

My face is hot, my heart is beating loud and I can't understand myself!

AHHHHH!!!! am I really...?

I sighed and internally punch myself. Darn it. Am I even worthy? Am I even allowed to? She too good for me, and she's just too much for me, I think liking was me drawing the line already but loving her? - it's like I'm falling to a bottomless pit.

There are others who are worthy for her, there are others who are powerful enough to protect her and everything, and I don't know if I'm even strong enough for her.

Ahhh, what does it matter? I'll get rejected anyway, it'll all end up the same as the others and I know how bad and guilty she feels when she does.

I don't want to burden her with another problem, maybe I'll just try to like her secretly and not show it, I'll try to stay low as much as possible and just support her all the way to whatever she wants.

Cause for me, she's more precious than anything. The world doesn't deserve her, why does the world even have her?

I don't wanna be rejected, and I don't want her to be hurt too.

I sigh and stretch my arms back before going to the kitchen to get myself dinner that Singapore made.

He makes delicious food so I can't help but anticipate every dinner on what he'll cook next.

And while I eat, I'll try and distract myself.

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West building 2nd floor - 11 : 35 am.

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I walked inside the hallway with cosmos besides me, while walking I caught a small glimpse of Russia playing the guitar inside the music room.

The door had a small gap so I peeked inside. His hands were moving so it means there must be a sound coming from him - unfortunately I can't hear it so cosmos is the only one who can hear it.

I wonder what it sounds like.

I turn to cosmos who immediately gave me a sign: *it's trash, I don't think he knows how to play the guitar, he kept grumbling and it sounds like he's irritated. The keys we're off and yeah... It's trash.*

I covered my mouth and kept my laugh quiet as possible but, Russia seems to be dedicated on what he's doing.

I wonder what made him practice guitar?

I leaned back and we both continued walking and it didn't take long for me to see res rose walking to the same direction as ours yet her

back was facing us.

I was about to call her by calling her name but, I was outrun by North Korea who spoke to her causally.

Of course she spoke to him as well before they both walked together. The sight of her walking with someone else gave a painful throb in my chest.

Badum

I smiled bitterly and just stopped my tracks, waiting for them to disappear first before continuing my walk again.

I'm sure cosmos realized it and I appreciate him not prying anymore, since it's already obvious based on my expression.

I soften my gaze at them before they turn right and finally disappeared.

Cosmos placed a hand on my shoulder, I perked a little before nodding and look down on my feet.

Am I really worthy?

I should stop before I hurt myself.

Get it together Iran, get it together. Just have a tiny crush on her and that's all - don't cross the line like you created, this is your spot and that is hers, don't evade her space. Respect her space...

Don't stress her more than she already is Iran. Keep it together, contain your emotions, bottle your feelings, don't let it break, don't open it. Know your place Iran.

Know your place.

I look up and smiled at cosmos *"I'm fine cosmos, let's go, or else we'll be late"*

I held cosmos's wrist and hurriedly pulled him.

I kept a smile when I faced him but for some reason, my smile turned into a frown as soon as I took the lead.

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3 : 16 pm

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Cosmos said he'd be at the office again so I went home first. I didn't have a club or anywhere to go anyways so I just agreed.

While walking towards the dorm, my eyes suddenly couldn't stop looking to the spot where we found red rose asleep.

I stop and contemplate whether I should or not.

I took a deep breath and raised my feet to move towards the dorm, but of course. I suddenly can't control my body and my feet was fast like lightning walking to that wooden area.

Slowly making my way, I expect to see no one and just spend a little time here to relax and think to myself.

But of course, the more closer I get, the more light I feel and the more stronger that minty scent gets.

I stop and just stared at her.

Leaning on the tree, sleeping in such a place in a defenseless form. It's like you're trying to captivate any man here with just a simple trap.

She sits there, limp and sleeping with her phone resting on her lap, hands on both sides and head a little tilted to the side, exposing her neck. She was also wearing an earphone and one of them has already fallen off to the side.

She's been sleeping a lot huh? Is she really okay? This is more than those maggots clinging on to her, or the preparation for the spring party; I can tell something else is bothering her.

I sigh, knowing there's nothing I can do to help other than support her instead.

I brush my hand gently, stroking her cheek and neck.

"Ah" I jolted when I suddenly pulled her collar a little to see more.

Ahhhh Iran! You've done it! You've done it now!!!! You're a sinful good for nothing man! You're dirty! You should be punished Iran!!!!

I crouched down and internally punch myself for doing something shameful.

I'm sorry red rose! I didn't know what came over me! But–

She's soft, softer than I imagined, the man for her surely is lucky, Estonia and Singapore sure are lucky; to be a fated one to such person.

I'm really, really, jealous...

I glance down to her phone on her lap, double tapping the screen, it showed me her lock screen that shows what music she's listening.

Relaxing music in 5 hours.

I snorted and held back a laughter, to think she's really *that* stress that she listens to this.

Ahhh you're so cute. So cute.

Bathump .

There it is again, my heart won't stay still, it's restless.

I took the fallen other earphone and placed it in my ear - of course I hear nothing but faint sound, although it's faint I still hear nothing.

I wonder what you're dreaming right now?

I don't want to like you yet I do.

I don't want to love you yet I do.

I don't want to miss you yet I do.

I don't want to think of you yet I do.

I don't want to talk to you yet I do.

I find myself doing things I don't want to do, especially towards you red rose... Especially towards you, what did you do to make me feel this way? Certainly I have no reason but I can't help but do.

There's something making me like you, and it was the moment I saw your yellow eyes.

I shouldn't feel this desperate to a simple crush, I shouldn't feel this desperate...

"Haaa... I like you philipia, I'm sorry I like you... I'm sorry I'm just another person added to your problems and you'll have even more problems how to answer me..."

I held her hands that's on the ground, intertwining it with mine. It's soft and warm.

I don't want... To let go.

"I'm sorry I like you... But it's okay, you don't have to answer me, it's okay you don't have to say *I'm a good friend* because I know you don't know how to answer and you're scared to tell me that you don't feel the same..."

I sobbed, bitting my lower lip as a dam in me finally broke "I'm so sorry that I do, I'm sorry I fell so deeply... In love with you..."

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I flutter my eyes open and realized that I've only been wearing one piece of my earphones while the other fell. I groaned as I stretch my back after that – somehow – comfortable nap.

I look down to my phone and turned the music off before standing up and dusting my skirt.

I perked and turn to the spot right next to mine, there was evidence of someone sitting there, it still looks recent so maybe the person who was with me, guarded me?

I giggled; how kind of them. I wonder who it was.

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Dorm building [1] - 4 : 45 pm.

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As I got back home, I flop down on my bed and suddenly feel so tired - tired than anything my whole life *again.*

Is it because I was also assigned to take care of the spring party? The lessons? Professor Reich and his stressing lessons? Or maybe...

I sigh and turn to my phone that's off, the dark screen shows my reflection - and of course without even realizing it. There's dark marks under my eyes.

I stood up and turn to my mirror and it really is dark bags.

I groaned "goodness me, what is taking a toll on my body this much? Surely it's not the preparation, it's almost the same as leader works - which is way more intense and stressful - so what is it?" I said to myself while staring at my reflection.

' Philipia dearie"

There was a sudden throb in my head, causing me to wince in pain "Filip..."

"You're really vulnerable, right now"

I blink multiple times, to help ease the pain "vulnerable?..."

Talking to alters while concious is mentally draining.

"Hahaha! Yeahh , which is no good, ya know, mauve and iwazaru almost took lead, good thing I was here"

I bite my lower lip and crouched a little from the overwhelming pain "okay, th-thank you for telling me..." I winced.

"Hahaha! Alright, looks like you're in a super painful state"

I gasped as the tightening throb in my head finally unknotted; making me sigh in relief and fall on the floor.

I jolted when my door erupted a soft yet startling knock "angel? You okay in there? Is your head in pain?"

How come Israel knows whenever I'm in pain?

"I'm okay Israel, thank you for c-checking up on me" I replied.

There was a short pause before he spoke again "look, angel, you don't have to keep it to yourself, these days you've been a bit gloomy and tired. Your headache gets worse each day yet you still come to school"

I stood up and head to my door; as I was about to hold my doorknob, Israel spoke again "angel" he called, voice softer than a cloud that sends a comforting wave in me.

I can tell Israel leaned his forehead against the door, his heavy breathing can be heard even from here "depend on other people too, depend on me too, you can't expect to just do nothing while you're having a hard time..."

I look down "I'm sorry I made you worried Israel" I responded "but I'd like to keep this problem just for me"

I hear Israel sigh "sometimes I feel so useless angel, it hurts me when I know you're not well, yet it hurts me more when you still look at me with a smile - I want to help you angel, let me help you; the same way how you helped me"

I smile creeped on my lips; somehow that made me happy, Israel cares for me.

As I opened the door, Israel stood there with a sad expression; it looks like he's about to cry "why does my heart clenches when you make that face?" I asked, leaning my hand on his cheek.

Israel smiled bitterly, holding my hand that's on his cheek "angel, you don't deserve to be that sad" he placed his free hand on his chest.

I don't understand, why can't I understand?

He bite his lower lip and stares at me, teary eyed, "can't you see that I like you? That I like you not as a friend, not as a sibling, not as a person who owe you - but I like you as you... That's why I want to help you with whatever help I could angel" he sobbed and leaned his face on my hand that's on his cheek, inhaling deeply; he intertwined his fingers with mine.

Israel likes me... As me?

Shouldn't I be happy? Or maybe sad or angry or anything?

Yet I don't feel anything, why am I so hollow?

I retreated my hand and took a step back to my room, looking away, I fiddled with my thumb "it's m-my turn to cook dinner tonight, just give me a few minutes, Israel should rest too..." I held the door and closed it halfway "I'm sure your tired now..." I added.

Maybe if I don't answer his words, maybe I can avoid hurting him?

As I closed the door, that soft click made me weak on my knees. For

a second, I thought I saw Israel holding back from bursting into tears.

I leaned against the door and I can hear his soft sobs and sniffles before his footsteps leaves and another sound of a door closing followed.

Did I do the right thing? I didn't answer and I simply avoided it; so maybe I was right?

I pull my knees close to my chest and hug it "why do they have to like me that way... Why me?"

"Pretty pearl"

"You're cute, that's why"

"So... Beautiful"

I gritted my teeth and head to my mirror, looking at myself.

Those compliments I get - they somehow make me uneasy; it feels like something is making them say it, and I don't like it.

I held the mirror, biting my lower lip - I want to break any mirror or anything that can make me see my reflection...

I headed outside to prepare for dinner and tried my best not to make it seem awkward for me and Israel (although he's in his room).

One by one, Malaysia, Indonesia, Germany and Brunei all came back from school and their club activities. Brunei wanted to help with dinner but, I insisted on doing it instead - to clear my mind off or somehow distract myself.

As I finished cooking dinner, we all decided to eat (except for Israel) I wanted to knock and apologize for my rude behavior earlier so that he can eat with us; but Germany already did it for me - he knocked on Israel's room and ended up being rejected with a very angry curse word.

It made me shiver.

And it's clear he didn't want anyone to talk to him; I guess it's really my fault.

"Did something happen?" Brunei asked while washing the dishes.

I bite my lower lip and nodded.

Indonesia tilts his head "what happened?" He asked.

I sigh and lean back on the counter "it's complicated" I answered.

As Brunei finished washing the dishes, he turns to me and raised a brow "seriously what's going on?" He sternly asked, crossing his arms on his chest.

I shrink between my shoulders and look down "it's really nothing"

"Tsk, Philip, talk" Brunei insisted.

Malaysia steps between us and faced Brunei "calm down, I'm sure they had some sort of argument and it's better if we don't pry"

Brunei furrowed his eyebrows and gently push Malaysia aside and faced me again "what happened?"

I grip on to my shirt and shake my head; it feels like I've done something wrong and I'm being scolded for it.

"Brunei, don't pry" Indonesia defends.

"Why? If it's important we should know, maybe we can help"

I doubt it, it was Israel's feelings, I have no right to tell someone about it. And it's me who's the problem, I'm an insensitive and stupid person.

"Philip" he called my name with such heavy tone. I didn't like it.

"How rude"

I shit my eyes closed from the sudden throb; Perla just spoke.

I gritted my teeth and I can feel her trying to switch - of course I had to hold her back or else it'll be a mess.

"Philip" he called again but this time, I look up to him, holding myself back.

"It's nothing" I sternly replied.

Brunei shake his head and took my wrist "let's talk, and tell me what happened" he said as he began to drag me out of the kitchen.

But I held my ground and yanked my hand away "why do you need to know Brunei? If I want to tell I will tell, if I don't at least respect my decision and privacy, you're not my mom or anything so please!" Streams of tears flow down my cheek "please just don't force me to speak!"

Suddenly, there was another painful throb, I held my head and bend a little from the pain.

"Goddess! Are you okay?!" Germany asked who was at the living room - rushed to my aid -

I shake him away and head towards the front door, slamming it behind me.

I can hear Malaysia and Indonesia calling me back but I just feel so restless these days.

What's happening to me?

I've been so weird, I feel angry, I feel irritated, I feel like the people around me likes to meddle with my problems, why do they want to know so bad about my life?

Just stay away from me and leave me alone... Even if it's just for a while.

"Ngh!" I pushed the door open of the dorm rooftop - that immediately greeted me with a strong wind, I took a deep breath and exhaled.

It felt like I was holding my breath the whole time while climbing up the stairs here.

I can feel an alter trying to switch, but I can't let her do that...!

I gasped, knees collapsing on the floor, the wind blowing stronger and stronger with every beat of my chest.

It's hard to breath, it's hard to...breath!

"Red rose!"

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I ran as fast as I could after blurting out the words that I just said.

My face was on fire and I can't keep my heart to stay still! What is happening to me!?

Closing the door behind me, I slumped on the floor and just catch my breath from that somewhat a million miles of walk from the plaza to the dorm.

Did I really just said those to her? While she's sleeping?! What if she was half awake and she was listening to everything?!

Ahhhh!!! Iran you've messed up big time now!

I sprang up and jumped to my bed, the soft and rich cushion making me bounce a little and just curl into a ball with my pillow and blanket.

How can I face her now?! How am I supposed to face her now?! What should I say?! What should I do?!

Now that I'm aware of my stupid feelings, what am I suppose to do? How should I act?! What if I become tense and stiff infront of her?!

That would be so uncool!

I sigh and spread the blanket and pillow apart from me and just stay on my bed while staring at my ceiling.

I reached for my hand and just stared at it, the shadow looming over my eyes and face.

But if she did hear it, a part of me wants to hear her reply and a part of me already knows what her reply is.

I'm just gonna end up heartbroken, better keep it to myself and hope for the best she doesn't know!

I changed into a more comfortable clothes and got out of my room after slapping both my cheeks gently, to make it seem less obvious that I was blushing and just feeling the butterflies still lingering in my stomach.

"*You look different*" Laos grins, making me jump from my position where I'm trying to pour myself a water (to calm the nerves)

I look away and tried to act natural by drinking but failed miserably since my hand was shaking the whole time.

Laos stared at me like I'm the alien instead of cosmos who was cutting carrots at the counter.

"*Cat got your tongue?"* He smirked.

I flinched and turn away, my face growing beat red.

I signed him and cosmos translated it for me.

And I signed at him saying: *There's no way you know!*

Laos raised a brow and approached me, which of course I did the opposite.

But my back hits the counter and I'm trapped with Laos looking at me suspiciously.

Ahh, this guy knows how to read tarot cards, I forgot...

"*You're... Shocked? Andddddd in denial"* he spoke.

How does he know?!?!??

I turn to cosmos who only stared at me for a second before shaking his head and return to cutting carrots.

Isn't he supposed to be at room 1?! Why is cosmos here again?!

Laos giggled and pats my head before leaning close, covering both sides of his mouth making me the only one to see his lips move *"it's okay to be in love"*

I lived a good life, I'm ready to go to the world of embarrassment paradise.

I smiled hollowly before walking like a robot out of the kitchen and towards the living room where Cambodia, and Singapore are; I can tell, Laos was laughing out loud. I can feel the room vibrate from his strong voice.

I wanna take a breather...

I sigh and placed my glass of water on the table before going out of the room.

There's no place at school and it's dark so it means it's scary.

Maybe the rooftop of this dorm will do.

I head towards the elevator and waited for the doors for me to enter, but just as it opened, I felt a strong vibration from the floor. Signifying someone fell or someone running really fast.

I followed where I *felt* where it came from and found the door that leads to the stairs for the dorm.

I entered and saw nobody but when I looked up, I saw someone running towards the top. I held the railing that connects to all these stairs and felt a faint vibration.

Who is it? I took one step and watched carefully to who it is, but then - I saw a white petal gently falling down to me.

I caught it and leaned it close to my nose - minty and strong.

Reminds me of the flower on red Rose's ear...

I felt another faint vibration from the railings but this time, I ran and followed; could it be her? Why would she be here anyways?

It took me about a minute since I had to rest every now and then, running up the stairs is no joke. It feels like my whole oxygen is drained.

I look up again and saw the door, slightly open and the strong wind blows inside.

I shiver from the cold and realized – maybe it wasn't a good idea to take a breather to the rooftop.

But when I pushed opened that door, I saw red rose again, she looked like she was in pain and she was gasping for air - did the run through the stairs took a toll on her too?

I took a deep breath, composing myself as I ready to approach her, but when I took one step, she suddenly fell to her knees, clutching on to her chest.

Oh no! She's in trouble.

Hurriedly running to her aid, I held her shoulders and lay her on my lap before shaking her gently "red rose!" I called and she shot her eyes up at me.

Bathump .

Really, those mismatched eyes still surprises me all the time. It's so unnatural and just stunning.

She press her lips together before her eyes starts to water, glimmering and shining from the bright moon above us.

"You okay?" I asked. Hopefully my words weren't slurred.

She looks away and sit up, still holding her head.

I turn to her side and signed: *should we go downstairs and get water? You look like in pain...*

She smiled at me and shakes her head, signing back: *I'm okay, I came here to get away for a while.*

"Really? Are you sure?"

She nodded before her smile disappear "*I just need to calm myself with something"*

Me and red rose sat near the edge - there was a railing so we should be safe from falling - and we just sat there, quiet but every now and then I would glance at her, staring at her small figure, back straight with her head laid low.

She must be going through something but it's best to let her take the lead if she wants to talk about it or not.

Red rose then closes her eyes and sighs before her mouth opens and sang something I couldn't hear.

Pity, I wished I could hear her voice, I wonder what it sounds like? I'm so curious yet there's nothing I could do about it...

I'll remain deaf and unable to hear for the rest of my life.

It's best to forget this melancholy feelings about wanting to hear again.

I look down to where the ground looked endless with this tall dorm building.

The place was dark but there was some lights turned on for people to see the way.

I jolted when I felt warm hands placed on top of my left hand; swiftly turning to red rose, she wasn't looking at me but she's aware

she's holding my hand.

She's aware right? It wasn't me right? Wait, is this *those* moments on TV where the couple would kiss from a romantic moment?

Perhaps... This is my chance?! Shoot, maybe I should've brushed my teeth again or maybe gurgle something.

I must make it perfect!

Her hands then suddenly intertwines with mine, making me shiver a little from her gentle touch.

I turn back to her again and this time, she's looking at our hands that are intertwined.

I watched her lips, focusing if she's about to say something.

And she did.

"Does your heart race when I hold your hand like this?"

Ohhhhh shootttt!!!! Is this it?!??

I hesitantly nodded while looking away, hiding my flushed face with the back of my hand.

She taps the back of my hand and I peeked back at her *"mine doesn't..."*

Oh...

Badump

Nevermind, why did I even expect? This is red rose, she's oblivious and innocent.

She retreats her hand and stares at it *"maybe there's something wrong with me"*

Wrong with her? What's wrong with her? For me, you're perfect.

"Maybe I'm not meant for something like this..." She brings her knees

close to her chest and hugs it, placing her chin above it *"maybe this was never destined for me... Yet I feel so bad... I feel so bad for the people who does"*

Her eyes tells more than what's she's saying. Her eyes tells me a million confessions that she can't say.

"Fated pairs, or the line" she smiled again - she smiled bitterly yet sweet.

"I don't believe in those..."

Ahhh... Maybe we are similar.

I sigh and pats her head "why do you stress yourself for something trivial?" I spoke.

She looks at me, eyes big and confused.

"Look at me, I can't hear, but I don't feel bad, I don't feel bad that maybe I can't hear what people's problems are, sometimes that's how life is red rose" I grinned. Taking her hand again and kissed the back.

Ahhhh!!!!!!! I did it! I kissed the back of her hand!!

"You don't force your way through it, bad things come, because without bad things, how can the good things come? Isn't that why hero's are called hero's? Thanks to the villain, cause if you ask me, the real protagonist in a story is the villains they're the ones making the story flow"

Was that perhaps cool? Was I cool?!

Red Rose just stared at me before looking away, deep in thought.

Ah, she's actually thinking about it. Why does it make me happy?

It didn't take long for her to make a smile and hold back a laughter but fails to do so.

"Hahaha! You're right, maybe I'm just thinking so much about it; and

maybe that's why the people around me gets hurt more"

I wanna hear her laugh, I wanna hear everything about her.

Look at her smiling and laughing, look how breath taking that is...

It's fine - it's fine if this is the end for me to reach out to her.

There's a limit to how a person can do. And I'm at that limit now.

I felt like my voice quiver and vibrate, until my hands caress her cheeks.

She slowly stopped and turn to me, smiling and nuzzling her face against my hand.

Bathump .

I know I'll suffer; even with just a single touch - but for some reason.

For some billion stupid reasons...

I confessed on the spot...

Bathump .

"Red rose, I love you..."

Has my world always been this loud?

———————

< < < End of Chapter 5 : It's loud in a quiet room.

> > > Coming Chapter 6 : Canon of lies.

———————

Fact : Ten Leaders met the same woman.

Fact 2 : Vietnams wife never died.

Fact 3 : Philipia did had a lover (but was forgotten)

Fact 4 : kati's club was a secret and dangerous.

Fact 5 : China's father was jailed.

Fact 6 : Someone is lying

Fact 7 : Mrs. France's fated pair was UK's brother.

Fact 8 : Germany isn't aware of his feelings.

Fact 9 : Perla's eyes were gauge out by Spanish Empire.

Fact 10 : Just shut up and accept my love <3

[I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter, sorry if it's somehow strayed a little, I dunno anymore, I just have so many plans for this book. But, I'll be editing Mandela effect and - oh wow, oh boi. Ya'll really wanna read it ^^;]

[I know it's much better to write one story at a time but - sometimes I get writer's block in this story so I need something new to refresh my mind and help me create a chapter that's gonna satify me and you all]

[Cause oh boi, I made 5 draft of this chapter ^^; tsukareta]

[Wishing you all the best and see ya on the next one~]

[Much love ~]

Chapter 6 : Canon of lies

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy~]

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When you lie about something, is the consequence a good thing? Or a bad thing?

I'm not saying that lying is all bad; there are white lies. And white lies are something you do for the sake of something or someone better.

Why can't I see you? Can I see you? I'm dying to know who you are, I'm dying to meet you...

I stop and crumple the 34th paper I'm writing on before throwing it in my trash bin that's already full.

Not long ago, my pet owl Athena got lost and was missing for a few days.

I didn't know what happened to her or how she flew all the way to pangaea, fortunately, someone was kind enough to help and tend to her.

I couldn't be anymore grateful for this kind person who helped my one and only friend. I wanted to know who they were, but they'd rather keep themselves anonymous - it's fine for me but as days and weeks gone by.

I've become impatient, I've become curious: *who is this person I'm talking to?*

Right now, I'm in my own room in my dorm, sitting on my chair and writing on my 35th paper for the letter I'll be sending.

They replied on my last letter (of me asking to meet them) that they still can't meet me.

Who is this person? Why am I so anxious to meet them? Why am I so restless? Endless questions kept flooding in.

I sigh and leaned back on my chair before glancing to Athena who's asleep on her bird stand. I smiled and look back to the letter.

Taking their reply, I read it again for the third time.

You seem to be having fun in school, I sure hope you're doing well with your studies, life's been good on my side. How about yours?

Today, I saw a blue butterfly by my window, it gently lands on my finger and I get to examine it's beauty, it was really beautiful, unfortunately, butterflies tend to live short. Beautiful things tend to live short; don't you agree? I've also been giving Athena a quick grooming, she really needs it.

Oh by the way, this friday, there's going to be a fireworks display, make sure to look out your window, and they said; if make a wish on the fifth boom of the firework, exactly at 8 pm, your wish will be fulfilled.

Looking forward to your next letter.

I closed it neatly as I stared at the ceiling, leaning the letter close to me, that familiar minty smell lingers on it.

It's so familiar, I think I smelled it from someone else, though I can't seem to remember.

But fireworks huh? I hate anything loud and booming though and I'm sure - that myth of wishing on the fifth boom, it's just a hoax and it's just something for you to get hooked in.

But they seem to believe it entirely, I guess it won't be bad. But I really do hate fireworks.

I groaned and scratch my head irritatingly.

I really wanna meet them for some unknown reason.

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Monday - 11 : 45 am.

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"Athena!" I called. Athena then pops out from the tree at the main garden, she flaps her wings before landing on my right forearm "hey there beautiful" I greeted while rubbing her head as she cooed at me.

"Hey grease, there you are"

I flinched and groaned; turning back, I look over my shoulder to see Norway and Brazil standing by the entrance of the main garden.

"It's *Greece*, not grease" I stated, clearly insulted by that stupid nickname.

Norway grins "it's the same thing, right?" He turns to Brazil who's glued to his phone - but nodded anyways.

"Ha. Ha. Funny" I replied and walked towards them.

"Had lunch yet?" Norway asked as we three walked to the cafeteria.

I shake my head in response while feeding Athena her treats "not yet"

"I think there's that thing you like at the cafeteria today" Brazil spoke, eyes still glued to the screen "I checked it earlier"

It doesn't really excite me, anything that's edible is okay for me. I've learned to be satisfied on what's on my plate and what's being fed to me.

That's what my mother taught me.

As we arrived at the cafeteria, Norway and Brazil went ahead to

order. And out of the corner of my eyes, I saw Vietnam and Singapore, arguing about the menu.

Strange, I thought for sure Singapore is a germaphobe, or maybe he's okay now? That's good for him; although I know germaphobe is hard to cure - let alone improve it.

"Hey! Grease! What do you want? Set B or set A?" Norway called.

I signaled him since I'm too tired to yell back.

"Set A it is!"

I look around and went ahead to look for a table and say down, and not far from where I am is where Canada, France, NZ and Australia sits.

Better ignore this lovesick idiots.

Canada was facing his back on my direction, giving me view to his phone - he was scrolling through it - and how I wished I didn't catch a glimpse of it.

He was scrolling through his gallery, it was full of thaflt female leader's stolen pictures. I can tell it was stolen since most of it where taken from afar or when she wasn't looking directly at the camera.

Sheesh, he's so weird, he gives me the weird vibe.

"Yo" Brazil called and sat down on one of the chairs - so did Norway.

"Have you decided on what to wear on the spring party?" Norway asked as he ate his lunch.

Brazil shakes his head "I'm still contemplating whether I join or not"

Norway furrowed his eyebrows "oh? Why's that?"

"Not a fan of crowd, and I get bored easily on parties" he replied.

Same, although the difference is that I will not join at all. I just want to stay indoors and hopefully no one will notice me locking myself in my room.

"Huh, that's a bummer, though I'm sure grease here won't be joining at all" Norway stated and I nodded.

He chuckled "oh well, I guess it's just me, Egypt, Finland and Estonia then"

Spring party, what's so fun about parties? It's loud and crowded, you'll only tire yourself and probably eat less food since you'd be anxious to dance with someone before the night ends.

Athena suddenly perks up, her head doing a 360 (she's an owl anyways) before flying off somewhere "ah! Athena?!" I called as I watch her go.

Weird, she's never done this.

"Where'd your bird fly off to?" Norway asked while chewing.

I shrug, confused as he is "I don't know, she's never done it before"

"Maybe she's starting to grow up and finally leave the nest" Brazil teased to which Norway laughed at.

It wasn't even funny!

I glared at both of them "Athena and I have been together for as long as I remember, she wouldn't just go and *leave the nest* she has no nest to begin with!" I explained, as if I'm trying to convince myself - because what Brazil said makes sense.

"Oh dear, then maybe she found her partner" Norway added, sipping on his drink.

I grumbled and lost appetite "I'm gonna go and find her" I said and stood up.

"Ah! Wait! Your lunch!" Norway called but I ignored him and continued to follow the direction Athena flew off to.

I kept looking above, under the trees, somewhere where an owl could use as a hiding place.

I catch my breath, bending a little and using my knees for support, I wipe the bullet size of sweat running down from my forehead to my chin.

"Athena, where are you? Why did you leave?" I anxiously said to myself as I decided to walk while looking around.

As I arrived at the back of the west building, I perked when I hear a faint sound of her cooe.

"Athena?" I called and followed it, before it led me to the dorm outdoor corridor "Athena?" I called once more before I finally hear her soft flapping of wings.

"Miss philipia!"

I flinched and turn my direction to the source, and when I did, I saw the female leader and a city - wearing a very odd looking clothes - standing in the middle of the outdoor corridor.

"Don't worry, she wouldn't hurt you" The female leader reasured.

"I'm s-scared... Eek!" The city replied as she was startled when Athena (who's resting in her forearm) flaps her wings gently.

Wait –

Athena doesn't like people, unless when she really trust them, and the only people who she trust is me and... The person who saved her.

I got out of the corner and approached the two, but my eyes was glued to the city girl where Athena is sitting at "y-you..."

My heart is beating really fast, I'm so nervous and shaking.

The both of them finally noticed me. The city girl turned to her back as she faced me, her eyes wide with shock and was startled.

"Ah!" She jumped and Athena flew from her and lands on my forearm. She immediately hides behind the female leader "m-miss philipia... I'm not good with meeting other...l-leaders" she stuttered as she spoke.

My heart is really racing, and my palm is sweating, is she really...?

"U-uhm, are you, the one who I've been writing to?" Athena then reacts and starts flapping her wings in joy.

So it's really this city girl?

"L-letters?" She spoke, her voice quiver.

I look over to the female leader: philipia was it? And glared at her, she's in the way.

But my gaze soften as soon as I look back to the city girl again "what's your name?"

She shakes her head and look up to philipia with a confused expression "miss philipia, who is he?" She asked.

Philipia cleared her throat "he's Greece" she introduce.

The city then steps out from behind and bows her head "g-greetibgs country leader Greece, may the heaven shower you with bless--kyah!"

I couldn't help myself but immediately hug her tiny form, nuzzling my face on her right shoulder "I'm so happy I finally get to meet you!" I squealed.

"Greece!! Where are yo– oh"

I turn back to Norway and Brazil who walked up behind us, I waved my hand with a huge smile on my lips "I'm here! Norway! I finally found her!" I yelled.

The city girl was trembling, before gently pushing me aside and hiding behind philipia again "h-he touched me" she sobs.

"O-oh, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to!" I apologized, panicking a little.

Philipia laughed and pats her head "this is Kyoto, she's the younger sister of J" she said.

Kyoto, what a cute name.

Athena then flaps her wings again and screech, it tells me something negative or something bad.

Ahh, I feel you Athena, I also hate female leaders. I guess you do too as well.

"Hello philipia, nice seeing you here" Norway greeted.

"Good day, Norway and Brazil, have you had your lunch?" She greeted back.

But enough about her, I'm more focused on Kyoto, this city girl who saved Athena and my pen pal.

I really didn't expect her to be this cute and timid, I guess that's why she didn't want to meet me, now I understand.

"Sorry, I'm sorry, let me introduce myself again, I'm Greece, nice to finally meet you Kyoto, my pen pal" I smiled, for the first time I smiled in many years.

She still seemed cautious around me, doesn't she believe me that I'm the person who's she been exchanging letters with?

"B-but, I'm n--"

"Yes, it's her" philipia cuts her off and spoke; she placed her hand behind Kyoto and looks at her with a smile.

Kyoto still looks confused until she blinked a few times and furrowed her eyebrows, as if disagreeing about something.

She hesitantly extend her small hand "k-kyoto, it's a pleasure"

I grinned and felt my heart jump for a second. I accepted her hand

and shook with her.

I can't believe I'm finally meeting her, I can't believe this. And on my reply, I really wanted to meet her now.

It was really a good thing I followed Athena here.

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Monday - 3 : 56 pm

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"Are you even sure it's her? I really think it's not" Brazil spoke as he lays lazily on the sofa.

I rolled my eyes and happily ate my meal "say all you want, all the evidence were right there! Athena even slaps her wings positively when I spoke to Kyoto" I explained.

Norway and Brazil glance at each other "I think it was the other way around" Norway stated.

A shiver run through me "no way, I'm quite sure it's really Kyoto"

Egypt walks out of the kitchen "is this the infamous anonymous pen pal you always spoke of, mongrel?" He asked and I nodded, happily.

"It is, and now I found her, she's no longer anonymous"

Norway sighed and facepalm "this is getting us nowhere and if you think about it, see was scared, no– *Terrified* at you Greece!"

"Well that's because I hugged her, I couldn't help myself! I was just so happy and excited! I would be too if I was her, so it's understandable"

Norway groaned and sat on the chair at the living room.

"So you're sure it's not sunflower?" Finland asked who's sitting while reading a book and Estonia was laying on his lap while listening to a music with his earphones on.

"Who's sunflower?" I asked.

Finland looked taken aback as if my question was insulting "she's philipia, sunflower is philipia!" He answered with a rather stern face.

"Uhh, okay? And no! I'm sure it's not her" I cross my arm "and if she is –"

"And *if* she is? What would you do?" Norway looked at me sternly, anticipation in his eyes.

I grumbled under my breath and sink between my shoulders "I'd probably be disappointed"

Brazil snorted and laughed "hahahah! Woowwwwww that's uncool" he said.

I slammed my hands on the table "can you blame me? I hate female leaders! I'm not saying they're all the same it's just... I don't feel comfortable around them!" I defend.

Egypt clicks his tongue "tsk, tsk, tsk. Fear is really scary, it can consume ones mind" he spoke.

I raised a brow at him before shaking my head and leaning back on my chair "I'm sorry okay? If I somehow offended you guys with my answer I'm sorry, it's just - I can't help it..."

Norway sighs "it's fine, but we're telling you grease"

"It's Greece"

"-yeah, whatever, grease or Greece they sound the same – anyways, we're telling you that, you shouldn't be like that, I mean. Sure if it isn't her then good for you but if it is her, then at least give yourself a chance"

I furrowed my eyebrows "why would I? Do I really have to? And besides, why is she a suspect as my pen pal?"

Finland raised his hand "because sunflower is always with your owl" he answered.

For a second my heart dropped "nahh, I'll prove it isn't her" I said, shaking the feeling away.

Finland smirked "it's fine if you don't, better yet, don't meet up with her at all, it'll give me benefit" he said before going back to reading.

Seriously, these two have been weird lately, what happened?

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"I don't like him!" Kyoto cried while whining on my bed in my room, she punches my pillow and kicks the covers, crying and crying saying she doesn't like him and she doesn't want to.

"Please Kyoto?" I pleaded for the 100th time.

She shakes her head sternly, looking away and clearly sulking "I don't want to! Why me? Why does it have to be me?" She asked, now facing me, eyes bloodshot from crying.

"That's because you're the one he saw holding Athena" I replied.

She took a deep breath and sobs again "it's all because of that stupid, ugly bird! I hate birds in the first place anyways! Why did I had to ask you to let me try holding herrrrrr" she cried once more.

I sat on the bed besides her and pats her back, she leans close and sobs on my chest "I'm sorry Kyoto, but, I had to do it, I didn't have a choice"

She looks up "why? I don't get it! You're a country leader! And a female at that, anyone would be thrilled to know that their pen pal was a leader all this time!"

I sigh and look away, glancing at the letter he sent yesterday at my study table "exactly, I'm a country leader, and a female at that – Greece hates female leaders" I explained.

Kyoto paused and looks at me, teary filled eyes "why?"

I smiled and pats her head "everyone has their own reasons Kyoto, I'm just really backed at the corner, I'm not even close to Greece yet he would hate me more, I don't want to disappoint him either, this exchanging letter thing is the only way he can vent out his problems and sadness buried in his heart that he can't tell"

Kyoto pouts and slumped back down on the bed "okay, I understand" she said.

I smiled and hugged her "don't worry, it will only be temporary"

She hugged me back "I will do it, only if you promise me you'll tell him the truth after one week"

I look at her "one week?" I asked, tilting my head.

She nodded "I can only be free for one week, because next week, I'll be taking charge of Tokyo's job as the capital city, so I would be busy" she explained with a proud grin.

"I'm happy for you!" I cheered and she giggled.

"I'm just worried about Tokyo's well-being, I wanted to visit her but they wouldn't let me..." Her voice trails off.

I look down and nodded "same, I wasn't allowed to visit her either, I'm getting worried"

Maybe if I ask tethys, he'll let me?

"Anyways, Tomorrow I'll visit again and... Y-you better be there to explain to him and tell him and not leave me alone with him!" She

cried again to which I nodded.

"Of course, I won't leave"

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Tuesday - 3 : 20 pm

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Greece stood infront of me while Kyoto was hiding behind me, as soon as Kyoto visited, he immediately walked up to her which startled Kyoto.

"Am I scary?" Greece asked, pointing himself.

Kyoto nodded.

"Sorry, I'm sorry. I'll try to appear a bit more kinder"

I've never seen Greece act like this other than being serious and cold all the time.

As soon as Greece noticed me (since he ignored my presence earlier) he glared at me like he always does "why are you still here?" He asked coldly.

But I didn't budge and just kept my composure and smiled.

"Hey! Don't talk to miss philipia like that!" Kyoto scolds to which Greece flinched.

"She's your friend?" He asked nervously.

Kyoto then hugged me infront and replied with a proud tone "of course she is! She's my bestest friend! You're not allowed to talk to her like that!"

Greece nodded, "ah, of course I'm really sorry" he apologized "then,

uhm, is it okay if I ask you to go out with me?" He asked, cheeks flushed red.

Kyoto's reaction was the opposite, she wasn't facing him so he can't see - he can't see the disgusted looked on her face. She turn her eyes upwards and stared at mine, her eyes tells me she's screaming:

SEND HELP!

"I wasn't really a-askimg for a date! That would be weird, it's uhm, I'm just asking if you could accompany me while we go out and walk in the city?" He corrected, fiddling with his thumbs, not knowing if he's choosing his words well.

Kyoto turns to him and back at me "just us two?" Kyoto wondered.

Greece's nodded.

Kyoto immediately snap her head back at me and her eyes is screaming:

NOOOOO !!! ABORT!

I smiled and leaned down "it's okay" I whispered "I can follow you both and tell you what to do through this"

I made her wear a one ear, earphone "I'll tell you what to say if he ask something that involves from the letters" I added, glancing at Greece who's looking away and waiting, anticipating for her answer.

"B-but, miss philipia..." She quietly whimpered.

I pat her back and hushed her down "it's gonna be okay, it's only for one week like you said right?"

She swallowed a lump and nodded "o-okay..."

Kyoto finally turns to Greece and hides the earpiece she's wearing on her right ear using the accessories adorned on her head.

"Okay, I'll go with you, just us two" she spoke, while looking away,

avoiding eye contact.

Greece smiled and offered a hand, which Kyoto hesitantly accepted.

And as soon as she touched his hand, I saw her shudder and glance back at me from her shoulder with so much disgust.

I'm sorry Kyoto.

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Paleozoic City , Central Park - 3 : 30 pm

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I peeked behind the post not far from Greece and Kyoto walking at the side walk.

I can hear their conversation through the earpiece and paid attention to everything Greece says, or else she might say something that's not entirely from the letters that he wrote and what I wrote.

He'll get suspicious if she did.

They arrived in a park and Greece offered or buy her anything she wants to eat, of course Kyoto didn't hold herself back and picked anything she find delicious.

After that, they went to a mall and I tried my best to blend in with the crowd by wearing a blue mask and hat.

They went to any store that Kyoto chooses, and of course the ones she chose were clothing store or any store that involves her country.

Greece seems to enjoyed her presence, that's good. At least he doesn't have to have that grumpy expression everywhere he goes. I'm sure and I can tell, he's been aching to meet the person who he's

been exchanging letters with.

If I said it was me, he'll be disappointed – worse, he'll be angry and will lose another friend.

I watched them again before Greece asked a question.

"Do you remember the fireworks that you asked me about?"

I flinched and immediately pressed the microphone for Kyoto to hear, and spoke "tell him, you remember and tell him it'll be this Friday"

" A-ah , yes I remember, it'll be this Friday...I think?"

Greece laughed and nodded "**let's watch it together then? Although I hate loud noises, but it'll be great to watch it with you**"

"Yeah... Sure"

Her voice trails off and they went to another store again.

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Pangaea male , academy entrance - 6 : 30 pm

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The day ended and everything went well, I was still standing not far from them, but Greece finally got back inside the academy while kyoto's guard came to pick her up.

As Greece finally got inside, I stepped out "how was it?" I asked and Kyoto immediately tackles me into a hug.

"I don't wannnaaaaa anymore!!!" She cried, rubbing he face against my chest "he kept invading my personal space! And I kept keeping my distance! He's talkative and just erugh! Annoying!" She added

and cried once more.

Me and her guard glance at each other thinking this is normal for us now.

"But you did good, it makes me happy" I smiled and Kyoto beamed.

"R-really?" She blushed and fiddle with her thumbs "t-then, I wouldn't mind doing it again!"

Kyoto was then escorted by a car and probably escorted back to her country.

It's gonna be a long week.

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7 : 05 pm

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I flop down on my bed as I feel all the tiredness from my body, "today has been a long day..."I said to myself.

As I stood up and head to my bathroom, a knock erupted from my door "Phil? Professor jack is here to see you"

I perked up and immediately opened the door "Tito?" I asked and Brunei nodded.

"He's outside, he wants to talk to you" he explained.

I went back inside again and took my jacket before wearing it as I headed out.

Tito was outside the dorm door, talking to Israel and Germany, as I step out he immediately noticed me and smiled "philipia" he called.

"Yes?" I asked as I walked up to him.

"You guys go on ahead, we'll call you when dinner is ready" Israel spoke and I nodded.

Me and Tito went to the elevator and head down all the way to the first floor, and outside the building dorm.

"Is there something you want to tell me Tito?" I asked.

He took a deep breath and look up at the night sky, the clouds were nowhere to be seen, signifying it's going to rain.

"Sorry if I couldn't really talk to you much at school, even though we're so close I still can't fufill my duty as your uncle" he spoke which made me smile and laugh.

I step besides him and leaned my head on his arm - since he's a bit taller than me.

"It's okay Tito, I can tell you're busy and doing your best" I reasured.

Tito then placed his hand around my shoulder "I know you'd say that but, it's still best to show results"

I grinned "it's really fine, but if you really want to, how about this Sunday we go somewhere?" I offered which he peeked up and nodded.

"Sounds good, how about the amusement park? I've seen one in the city" he placed his free hand under his chin "I've always wanted to ride the roller coaster"

I giggled "yeah! Let's do that, let's bring brother Greg too!" I beamed.

Tito rolled his eyes upon hearing brother Greg's name but nodded anyways "alright, I really can't say no to my favorite niece" he pinches both my cheek and pull them apart gently.

I laughed and he laughed "ahhh, you really have your mother's smile and eyes" his voice trails off before patting my head and hugging me "no matter what happens philipia, I'm always by your side and on your side..."

I smile creeped on my lips and hugged him back "thank you Tito" I whispered.

He pulled back and pats my head "anyways, uhm, that's not the only thing why I asked you all the way here" he said.

I tilt my head to the side "what is it then?"

He narrowed his eyes and looked up ahead, "I'm planning on baptising you"

I perked up and looked up at my Tito, who's eyes is distant and far "baptise me?"

"If we don't baptise you immediately, your birthmark will fade, not only fade, your lifespan would be of that of a commoner and normal citizen, which means it's short" he explained "not only that, you will lose your skill to heal, and I know you can't heal yet either without even experiencing the back fire of the marks on you"

I nodded, looking down at my feet.

"I heard from China, you healed him, you healed his *almost* dying body whilst not baptized, luckily your body heals rapidly, which is kinda rare" he added.

I remember that time, those scary and dark times. I want to forget those.

"That's why I'm going to baptize you for good, your last baptism"

I actually had no idea what baptism was or it even has many stages, I only knew it when I read it from a book – and all this time back at my country, the thing where they push me down the water was already baptism - and I had no idea that it was.

Brother never told me anything, and I was stupid enough not to ask, not even mark.

"Then, if I'm baptized, does that mean I can finally heal anyone with having my eyes bleeding?" I asked.

Tito looked taken aback from that gruesome fact but he nodded "yeah, that. But I do know you can only heal one time, one person per day - right?"

The book did say that, but I do remember healing Tito and Spain multiple times for one day before.

Or maybe I was able to because I didn't know and that I was forcing my body to, and that's why both my nose and eyes were bleeding out?

"I guess?" I replied before I hear a ring from my phone.

It was Israel telling me that dinner is ready.

Tito checked his phone too before putting it back his pocket "didn't know it's this late" he spoke and turn to me "go on ahead philipia, I'll go back to my room now"

I nodded and smiled.

Tito kissed my forehead and I kissed both his cheeks before running back to the building "love you philipia!" He yelled and I stop my tracks.

"I love you too Tito!" I yelled back and waved as I went inside.

When I got back, I ate dinner with everyone and helped the others with the cleaning.

As I went back to my room and washed up before changing into my night attire.

While reading a text from tethys on my phone, I heard a soft tap from my window.

I look over to the direction and saw Athena, who's holding a letter.

I sigh and opened the window, letting Athena in. She placed the letter on my study table and rest on her bird stand.

I can tell she's used to this and getting a hang of it.

"Good job today, Athena" I smiled and she cooed at me.

I opened the letter and read it's content.

Dear, kyoto

Today was really fun, I hope we can keep meeting and hopefully become closer.

Also, you were really cute today. And it made me really happy too, I hope it made you happy as well.

Again, I'm sorry if I was rude towards your friend - philipia. I didn't mean to, I'm just not fond of female leaders, I hope you won't think differently of me.

Anyways, I would want to spend another time with you again tomorrow, and I hope you'd be less scared of me now.

Goodnight and eat your dinner.

Sincerely; Greece.

I sigh and placed the letter down. I feel guilty but relieved at the same time, I'm guilty because I'm tricking Greece and I'm relieved that he is happy and that it wasn't me.

I glance over to Athena who's looking at me intently "what should I do Athena? I don't want Greece to find out, Kyoto can be available for one week only too..." My voice trailed off.

"Should I tell him immediately? Wait, no. If I do he'll be angry, then, should I really wait for one week? What if it gets worse?" I groaned and slumped back on my bed and let myself fall.

I leaned the letter closer to my nose and inhaled it's scent - the scent of forest.

It just keeps me calm.

"Alright, let's write him a reply"

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Wednesday - 3 : 20

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I stood far *again* and watched them go to different places and help Kyoto as much as I could.

But as time passes by, I noticed that Kyoto has somehow warmed up to him, she can finally talk easily without feeling uncomfortable around Greece anymore.

"Boo"

"Ah!" I flinched and jumped back when Norway whispered behind me.

He laughed "hahahah! I knew it, that city girl isn't grease's pen pal, it's *you"* he points at me.

I shrink between my shoulders "please don't tell him" I pleaded

Norway nodded; unexpectedly "okay! This looks fun anyways! Although I'm sure you have your own reasons"

I sigh and nodded "yes, I do"

"Does it have to do with his hatred towards female leaders?" He asked.

"Yes" I answered.

Norway pats my head "that's very sweet and understanding of you philipia, but, don't you think you're hurting him by doing this? If he finally knows the truth, he'll be heartbroken"

I know and I can't do anything about it.

I'm scared he'll be disappointed, I'm scared he's going to be alone and it's gonna be because of me.

Norway shakes his head "well, whatever it is, it's none of my busine–"

"Where would you like to go next?"

"I'd like to go there!"

I flinched when I hear both their voices behind me.

Quickly grabbing Norway, I pulled him and leaned my back against the wall and used his body to hide me.

Since we're in an alleyway it's tighy yet affective when hiding.

Norway was trapping me between his hands "whoah, easy the--"

As I hear Kyoto and Greece's footsteps getting closer, I removed my hat and covered our face and leaned close to him.

I feel Norway shudder as my lips made its way to his.

Now with this, it would look nothing but a couple kissing in the corner, Greece and Kyoto would have to walk faster in order not to get things awkward.

I slipped my tongue inside Norway's mouth and collided with his. He was taken aback for a second but quickly composed himself and kissed back.

It startled me but I went with the flow.

He leaned closer and pressed his chest against mine, his knees separating my legs and pressing it on the wall.

I can already hear Kyoto and Greece's footsteps getting farther and farther until it was just faint.

As we both separated, we were both gasping for air, and my legs seemed to grow weak.

I look up to Norway who's face is beat red, while our lips still has a string of our saliva.

He got back to his senses and jumped back while covering his lips with the back of his hand "w-what?..."

I blinked a few times before looking around, I wore my hat again and turn to Norway "sorry and thank you Norway, I didn't mean it but I had to" I smiled.

"That's your reaction? T-t-that's your reaction?! We just kissed! We *kissed* with tongue! In public!" He exclaimed.

It's just a kiss, does his brother or sister not kiss him? Well, I'm not one to judge, he is a different country so I guess it has different meaning for him.

But aside from it, I have to focus, I can't lose sight on Kyoto and Greece now.

I guess I'll explain it to him later.

"Uhm, sorry, really sorry Norway, but please don't tell Greece what I'm doing and I'll explain everything later"

He blinked a few times before nodding.

I smiled again and ran towards the direction where Greece and Kyoto went.

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6 : 45 pm

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The same thing happened at the end of the day.

Kyoto whining, her guards escorting her, and Greece going back to

the academy.

As I went back again, I saw Norway entering the elevator so I hurriedly catch up "wait!" He immediately stopped the door from closing before realizing it was me.

His face immediately went red.

I sigh and leaned back on the wall, glancing up at Norway who's ear were somehow red.

"Uhm, about today Norway, I'm sorry, I was hiding from Greece, cause if he saw me there, I'm just going to ruin the mood" I explained.

Norway looked away and nodded "it's fine, it's just... That was my first..." He muttered the end.

I shrink between my shoulders.

Great, look what you did philipia, you took Norway's first kiss.

I felt a throb when I suddenly feel mauve trying to switch, luckily, I feel Filip stopping it and the throb subsided in seconds.

The doors opened and Norway immediately got out without even glancing back at me.

He's really mad. I sigh and waited for the elevator to arrive on my floor.

I'll apologize to him.

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Friday - 5 : 30 pm

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I've been following Kyoto and Greece for a few days now, and they seemed to be getting closer than before, although Kyoto still vents out her whining and complaints at the end of the day everyday.

But now it's Friday, only two more days until I tell him the truth, but why do I feel restless? Is it not too late?

I stand not far from them and I don't give Kyoto on what to say anymore, besides, it's best to leave them be for a while.

I somehow feel like a matchmaker but, I'm a lying matchmaker.

I groaned and stretch my arms backwards "oh right, the fireworks"

I should watch it from the beach near the Academy, it'll be a good view, and maybe it'll feel more relaxing.

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I'm really happy, feels like I'm floating – but at the same time, something feels missing.

She tends to avoid the topic about the letters; at first I thought she was just feeling awkward, since most of our letters seems to reveal our real self.

I can understand that of course but sometimes, it makes me feel like she really doesn't want to talk about it and it kinda stings.

Most of those letters contain my most deepest thoughts, and she would just brush it off and it feels off.

Something feels off.

"Oh right, there's going to be a fireworks today" she spoke, her smile seems forced but, I'm glad she still agrees to go out with me.

Even though we would buy things for herself more than talk about the letters.

I nodded and followed her.

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Mesozoic public beach - 7 : 36 pm

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The beach is somehow filled with people - couples mostly - sitting and waiting for the fireworks display.

D-do we look like couples though?

The thought made me blush and shrink between my shoulders, I glance towards her where she's looking for a spot.

She turn to me and pointed the spot where there's not much people - oh gosh, is she going to confess?! Wait; that can't be right, maybe do something?!

I gulped and hesitantly followed her towards the direction near the rocky part of the beach and where it's more less crowded.

While following her and watching her small form from behind, I just realized how graceful she walks and that dress (kimono) she's wearing, it really suits her.

She stopped, I did so too; and every second she turns to me, my heartbeat was racing.

"Uuhm Mr Greece" she called, looking away while blushing intensely.

Is this it?!

"Y-yes! I'm going out with you!" I suddenly blurted out without even

thinking twice.

She stood there, shocked and surprised before furrowing her eyebrows "I was just going to give you this.."

She hands me a bracelet with my name on it.

"Huh? S-so you weren't going to ask me out?..." Somehow, I feel hurt - or maybe I'm just assuming things that isn't even there.

Is this some sort of one sided love? But it doesn't hurt as much.

She looks at me, quite disturbed before shaking her head "I'm s-sorry but I just don't see you that way" her voice trails off.

Ouch, I got rejected again.

Looking around, she fiddles with her sleeves before taking a deep breath "err, I really can't do this anymore"

Those words made my heart drop, thoughts upon thoughts kept racing in my head, millions upon millions of words were swirling like a tornado.

I don't want her to go! Is this why she doesn't want to meet me?

"W-what do you mean?" I asked, my voice quivering and my hands trembling.

She sighs and looks at me straight in the eye "I'm..." She spoke before swallowing a lump, as if she's having a hard time to say something.

I bite my lower lip and tried my best to hold back the tears "you what?–"

"I was never your pen pal! I was never the one who helped your bird! In fact! I hate birds!!" She exclaimed, fist clenched on her chest and eyes shut.

What? What does she mean?

What does she mean she was never my pen pal?

What does she mean she was never the one who helped Athena?

What does she mean she hates bird?

"That time you saw me holding your owl, I was just showing off to miss philipia that I can be brave enough to face my fear! And at the same time, you happen to see me holding her, and that's why you mistook me for your pen pal when the real person you've been exchanging..."

No.

"Letters with..."

No, don't talk, no more...

"Is actually..."

I covered both my ears and cut her off "stop! Don't... Don't continue it..."

This can't be, this shit can't be real...

I look up to her, my expression hurt and denying what is true.

I don't want this truth "why did you have to tell me!" I yelled, some people looking over our way.

Kyoto drops her hand and approached me, "be a man! I don't care if you don't like female leaders! that has nothing to do with me or to miss philipia! And the reason I'm saying this is, I'm more into girls than man!"

I froze on the spot, I couldn't believe it. Is that why she sometimes looks at me with a disgusted face?

"Look, I'm really sorry country leader Greece, but I can't keep pretending anymore, knowing your feelings were real, pure and sincere" she bows 90 degrees "but those letters that made you like that and made you feel like that? Those weren't from me, those

weren't from my hands, my mind or thoughts, those were all from miss philipia, her intentions are good, she just doesn't want to disappoint you" she added as she stands straight.

Not long after, her guards came to pick her up now. They spoke in their Language that I couldn't understand, but I can tell she's telling them to wait for a moment.

Kyoto approaches me and takes my hand, if she didn't tell me the truth, her touch would've made me jump "miss philipia made this for you, she said it's your favorite type of bracelet or something" she said as she wraps it around my right wrist "and she said to tell you – *may the heaven smile upon you*"

My eyes grew wide as she said those words. Those words that gave me hope...

Kyoto soon was escorted and left – she left me, all alone in that beach, we didn't even get to watch the fireworks. Stupid me, stupid mouth of mine; why did I have to blurt out those words.

If I didn't, maybe she didn't have to tell me the truth and feel guilty about it.

She also told me, she was planning to do this for two more days, but she can't help but feel bad for me now.

Ha! *Feel bad,* a city feels bad for a country.

That made me laugh, and it made me sad.

Weird, it doesn't hurt as much; usually rejection should hurt, but it doesn't.

I'm not angry or overwhelmingly sad - I am glad yet hurt but still... I'm also glad the truth has been told and spilled.

Now that I know, I don't know what to say or do anymore.

Should I really just stay here and wait for the fireworks? Ahhh but I hate loud noises...

I turn back, internally scolding myself and decided to just leave and forget all of this, and maybe stop writing to *her* as well.

It would feel like I would be fooling myself if I still do.

I sigh and weakly walk back, but as I did. At the distant, on top of the railings from the beach.

She stood there, her hands raised as Athena gently lands on her forearm.

She smiled and rubs her head, I'm sure Athena cooed at her.

Her lips moved as she stares at Athena, I couldn't make out what she was saying to Athena about since the loud booming of the fireworks finally began.

People cheered, people clapped and they've all began taking out their phones.

Still frozen on my position, watching her and Athena watching the night sky bursting with flower fire.

I don't like this. I hate this... Why of all people had it have to be her? Why?

If only I shut my stupid mouth, it would've flowed easily. Ahhh but, it'll still happen one way or another after the end of this week.

I look down and ran the opposite direction, I don't want to stay here any longer. I just want to go home...

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8 : 25 pm

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I slammed the door behind me, Norway and Egypt then walks out

of the kitchen.

"What happened? The date went wrong?" Norway grinned mischievously, but I don't even have energy to banter it.

I simply sighed and flop down on the sofa, sinking myself on the soft cushion.

Egypt smirked "I think that's a *yes*" he said before going back to the kitchen.

Norway walks out and sat across me, "did you finally found out?" He asked, his eyes tells me that he already knew.

I nodded "I don't even want to talk about it"

Norway scoffs and leans back on his chair "you're such a liar" he spoke.

It made me flinch and glare at him "why would I be a liar? I didn't even do anything"

Norway laughed "you said you didn't even want to talk about it, but I can tell, you *do* want to talk about it"

I groaned and shake my head "whatever, I'm pissed and irritated"

"Whether it be from your past or some sort of trauma, it doesn't change the fact that philipia.."

"No! Don't say it, don't even dare"

"Is actually your pen pal" he smiled.

I groaned and hug my knees close to my chest "ugh! Shut up!"

Egypt then peeked from the kitchen "I'm not surprised, I always see her talking to that owl of yours" he spoke.

I turn to Egypt, "so? I don't care anymore"

He scoff "ahhh mongrel, really, what's the matter? She saved your owl, she didn't want to be discovered knowing your reaction would

be *this,* and she even write letters to you" he said.

I rolled my eyes "yeah but it still changes the fact that she's a freaking country leader!"

Norway huffs "why do you hate them *that* much anyways?"

I narrowed my gaze at Norway; standing up, I stomped my way to my room before stopping at the hallway entrance "because my mother gave me an impression that female leaders just want to be the best and when someone is above them, they'll abuse and torture you to death..." I spoke.

As I closed the door behind me, Athena was already at her bird stand, resting while a new letter was placed on my study table.

I walked up to it and examine the unopened letter "is this from her Athena?" I asked which she cooed.

I sigh and opened the letter.

I'm sorry. There's a lot I need to explain, but please don't blame Kyoto, it's all my fault. If it's okay with you, would be be okay to talk? If not that's fine, and I understand if you won't write back anymore, I just want to clear some things...

-P

I threw the paper on the table and flop down at the bed "I don't want to write back, that's *that"* I stated.

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I shrink between my shoulders as Norway, Brazil and Greece stood infront of the elevator door.

They went inside and I step back – it's so awkward for me and Greece.

Although he's back to how he is. Cold and serious.

"Hello, philipia right?" Brazil spoke as he offered a handshake - which I accepted -

I nodded "yes, and you're Brazil" I stated which made him laugh and nod.

"I guess this is our first time talking, NZ and Australia said many wonderful things about you" he grins.

We hear Greece scoff and shake his head, followed by a mumble that I'm sure it's about me.

I look down and fiddle with my fingers.

Norway seems to notice it and pats my head "ignore the little kid right here" he said.

Looking up to him, our eyes meet and he quickly look away as his cheeks became flush.

"Who are you calling a kid?!" Greece scowls and kicks his ankle.

"Ow! Calm down" he said as he rubs his ankle where Greece kicked.

Brazil laughed and smacks Greece's back, causing him to flinch "calm down now Greece, don't make things awkward than it already is"

As the elevator arrived on the first floor, they immediately left as Brazil and norway waved at me.

I waited for a second before going as well, running towards the school entrance where Tito and brother Greg is already waiting.

Brother Greg immediately saw me and waved "pearl!" He beams and greeted me with a hug.

I hugged back and giggled "how are you brother Greg"

He grins and pats my head "why did it feel like forever since the last time I saw you?"

"That's because you're busy with your women" Tito bantered.

Brother Greg raised a brow "oh yeah? Jealous that girls swarm over me?"

Tito scoffs and rolled his eyes "I don't eat trash" he stated which made brother Greg angry.

"Huh?!"

Tito immediately took my right wrist and pulled me "come now, we have a lot to go"

We went to the amusement park and took any ride we thought was fun. Although the roller coaster was enjoyable.

I don't know about Tito and brother Greg though, after that ride, they both immediately threw up in a nearby bin.

After that, we just went to a mild one and ate snacks that we come across.

One after another, any ride, any food stalls, we would buy and try it.

"Ugh! My stomach feels weird" brother Greg said while chewing his food.

I pat his head and soften my gaze – I remember Greece, I hope he won't get angry towards Kyoto. I'd rather take the blame.

"You okay?" Tito walked up behind me and gave me a bottle of strawberry juice "you look so deep in thought just now"

I smiled and shake my head as I accepted the bottle "it's nothing"

Tito didn't seem to buy it, but he didn't pry anymore.

"Hey, are we done yet? My mind is spinning..." Brother Greg's voice trails off as his body falls to the ground.

"Ah! Kuya?!" I exclaimed when brother Greg fainted.

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The day ended and we had to drag brother Greg back to his house, luckily, I can still remember where it is.

"Damn it Greg, what the hell are you eating to get this heavy?" Tito groans as he placed brother Greg on his bed.

Looking around his room, it was messy. Magazines (the same one Russia owns) CD's, crumpled papers, food, plastic cups, anything that I think is trash is scattered all over the floor; there are even tissues too.

There's a lot of tissues, what does he clean it for?

I perked when I saw something sticking out under his bed.

"Greg! Hey, wake the hell up or I'll slap you!" Tito lightly slaps his cheeks yet there was no response from the fainted brother Greg.

I bend down and pulled what it was "oh my" I spoke as I examine it.

Tito looks over to my direction and jumped from what I found.

"Is this an underwear?" I asked, showing it to Tito.

He gritted his teeth and clenched his fist "GREGORIO DEL PILAR!!! WAKE UP!!!" he yelled and punched brother Greg on the stomach.

"Ackk!!! What the fuck?!" Brother Greg instantly woke up while holding his stomach.

Tito points the underwear I'm holding "explain that!" He exclaimed.

Brother Greg's expression turn bored "it's a panty, what's the problem?"

"The problem is that you're having sex while you're not married!"

Ah, Tito is still an old tradition person.

Brother Greg groans "ughhhhh!! The hell old man, it's fucking 20XX, everyone does it! Besides, I used a condom all the ti--fft!!"

Tito grabbed his mouth which shut brother Greg up.

I sighed and just stood up as the two began bickering.

I decided to go downstairs and recalled the time where everyone gathered up here to create a plan to stop my brother.

I narrowed my eyes as I went to the kitchen to get myself some water.

" Philipie"

"Ngh!" I flinched and almost let go of the glass from the sudden throb of pain in my head "hello, alpha..."

"Ahhh, philipie it's been a long time I've been out, I sensed you're having a negative energy around you, should I eliminate whoever caused that?"

I held my forehead - that's releasing bullet size sweat - and shake it "n-no, it's fine. You don't have to come out" I gritted my teeth from the pain that's growing.

"Really? Are you sure?"

I nodded, eyes shut close as the throbbing won't stop "y-yes, so please..."

"Then, when can I come out?"

"S-someday alpha, but right now, it's not time yet..!"

"Okay. By the way, why are you in pain?"

"Be-because, talking to you guys while concious is... Painful..."

"Really? I apologize, I'll make it better soon"

The pain subsided as alphas voice soon vanished.

I leaned back on the counter, catching my breath and trembling.

Alpha; my second protector, he can be sadistic and forceful; the mix of red and scarlet. He's never been out - like the others, I blocked him.

I jumped a little when I hear their footsteps coming down the stairs.

Immediately composing myself, I held the glass tighter and pretend like nothing happened.

"Like I said! I only have sex three times a day with my girlfriend!"

"Like hell it's just your girlfriend!"

They went to the kitchen and stop as they saw me, my back facing them.

"Oh pearl, you got thirsty?" I turn to brother Greg and nodded.

"It's a long day today" I smiled.

Tito looks at me like he's reading a book, and I can't help but feel like he knows what just happened!

Thankfully, brother Greg spoke and began rummaging his fridge "damn it, I forgot to do groceries" he said which irritated Tito.

And we know how Tito hates it when the fridge is empty.

As the two of them bicker again, I felt a vibration from my pocket, I fish it out and checked what is was.

"Huh?...Greece sent me..a message" I muttered and pressed the new message.

From: Greece

Lets meet up at Mesozoic beach today, I'll wait.

I press my lips together and feel my heart rate fasten.

I took a deep breath and faced my brother and uncle "uhm, Tito, brother Greg, I'm sorry but I have to go somewhere" I asked.

Tito raised a brow and placed his hand on his hip "uh huh, and where is that?"

"U-uhmm...it's somewhere" I look down and held my phone right.

He hums in response "righttttt, tell me where first" he crossed his hands.

Brother Greg scoffs and rolled his eyes "you can go pearl, I'll take care of this strict uncle here who thinks he's still living in the 80's"

Tito turns to brother Greg with a scowl "excuse me, but I don't think that's how you respect your elders Gregorio"

"Ugh, please don't say my name like that, it gives gives me goosebumps"

I took this opportunity to walk away since brother Greg was giving me a signal with his hands placed on his back, telling me to: *go on ahead.*

I got out of the house and ran towards the beach where Greece wanted to meet me.

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I catch for my breath as I bend down a little.

Looking around, the beach was empty since it's almost sunset but at the middle of the sand and before the sea.

Greece stood there, facing the sun that's setting with Athena resting on his right forearm.

I gulped and slowly made my way to him.

Athena turns her head and immediately flew towards my direction,

causing Greece to turn around and see me.

I suddenly regret coming here and I suddenly feel like running away.

I stop not far from him and waited for what he's about to say.

He removed the bracelet and hands it to me "I don't need it" he said.

I bite my lower lip and nodded; taking the bracelet before putting it inside my pocket.

"I don't want your apology either, you did nothing wrong anyways, but let me say this" he spoke "let's stop writing letters to each other"

I feel like my heart was clenching around me.

"I apologize if I still dislike female leaders, but it's not your fault you're a leader, in fact, I'm a bit relieved that it was you who helped Athena recover, if it was somebody else I'm sure they would've left her to die" Athena flew back to him and rest on his forearm "she's been with me for as long as I remember, so I can't imagine a life without her - but. I'm gonna have to stop this"

Greece faced me, still with the serious expression and cold gaze "so let's stop this, don't write back don't write at all, don't even think of writing to me"

I nodded, eyes now glued to the sand "I understand, I'm sorry if I somehow disappoint you and lied to you too"

He sighed and shake his head "that's fine. I mean - I was looking like a fool but it's fine"

As the area around us starts to darken, the sun finally sinks and disappear "let's pretend we don't know each other, and let's pretend, we don't see each other. Is that okay?"

Ahhh, was it the right choice? Was lying to him the right choice?

But if that's what he wants, I'll respect it.

"It's okay" I smiled.

Greece nodded and turn to his heel "goodbye" he said and I smiled.

As soon as I was about to leave.

The familiar pressure and heat looms over my body.

"Ah!!" I clenched on my chest and fall to my knees, my marks starts to glow and the overbearing heat was swallowing my whole body.

I turn back when I hear Greece fall on the sand as well. His marks glowing and showing, his body trembling and voice shaking.

"Pearl!" I hear brother Greg yell before running to my side and holding me in his arms.

Why are they here? Did they follow me?

"what the hell is... This?" His voice trails off as his eyes fell on Greece who's also on the sand, trembling not far from us.

Tito immediately went to his aid when suddenly, he flinched as he held his hand "that hurt..." He said.

Why? Why am I... Why am I fated to Greece as well? I thought only one person per pair.

But I already have two; Singapore and Estonia.

"Is this what they call, marking compatibility?" Brother Greg spoke as he faced Tito.

This isn't real, this can't be happening.

Why? I don't understand why...

Why am I fated to so many people? Why is it, that when I think it's about to end, another problem adds up...

I don't want to burden anyone anymore...

"Pearl! Pearl!" Brother Greg called but my vision is subsiding.

My sense of touch fading.

My hearing silencing.

The pressure between my thighs and chest is burning, this overwhelming desire and heat.

Is all familiar to me now...

It's too much. Everything is too much for one week...

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When you lie about something, is the consequence a good thing? Or a bad thing?

"Want to grab something to eat Brazil?"

And when you lie, do you think of the person you'll lie to?

"Yeah, I'm thinking of buying something, oh and Norway, the game I lend you"

Do you think of what they'll feel? Do you think of what they'll react to? Do you tell them the truth?

"Ahhh, right, the game. I'll give it back later"

What if that lie you've kept, became real?

"Later again? What if you forget it? *Again?* Get it now!"

What if that lie became true?

"Geez, I'm too lazy to go to my room"

What if the truth was never a lie?

"Grow up Norway, a man with a hair on his balls is no longer a kid"

Do you end up accepting it? Or not?

"What the... That's such a weird phrase Brazil"

I'm Greece, country leader and I hate female leaders...

"Hey Greece"

I turn to Brazil.

"Wanna grab something to eat?"

I nodded and stood up.

"Oh and grease" I glared at Norway.

"What?" I replied to which he pointed someone up ahead.

"It's philipia" he said.

My heart rate became crazy and I immediately turn back, but of course, Norway and Brazil just had to call her.

"Heyyyy, philipia!!!" Norway called while Brazil waves his hand.

I shrink and peeked at her over my right shoulder, she stopped and turn to face us "hello, good morning Norway, Brazil and Greece" she smiled.

I gulped and look away.

That's right, I'm blushing like a maniac. Because even if my hatred towards female leaders is still there...

The irony is –

"Wow, isn't she pretty again today grease?" Norway smirked as he nudges his arm at me.

I hid my face with the back of my hand and responded with a nod "she is..."

– I'm fated to a female leader who's also fated to two more.

And I hatefully love it...

Ahhh, even life is a lie for me now.

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< < < End of Chapter 6 : Canon of lies

> > > Coming Chapter 7 : Agape.

_____

Fact : Third Reich was once disabled (unable to walk)

Fact 2 : Singapore is part of the club.

Fact 3 : Filip is a gate keeper.

Fact 4 : someone told Israel to sail to the Philippines in order to get away.

Fact 5 : Armageddon had multiple fated pairs.

Fact 6 : UK was supposedly fated for Perla.

Fact 7 : Antarctica and Arctic Council are twins.

Fact 8 : Cosmos is an adopted son of MR. U.

Fact 9 : Perla was a country leader.

Fact 10 : If you don't want to accept my love I will not publish any more chapters <(` ^´)>

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[Hey guys it's me, G.D, I hope you enjoyed this chapter ~]

[On the facts area, please let me know which character fact you'd like to know, I just have so many I can't choose which one]

[Sorry if I upload one chapter per week only too, I'll try my best to publish more and fast πˆπ]

[Also, we have a group chat in Instagram, there - you'll be able to talk to me and ask me or tell me anything easily ^^ although I don't know how to do it, one of the readers made it ><]

[Anyways, see ya on the next one]

[Much love ~]

Chapter 7 : Agape

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be Grammatical errors and typos]

[And I'm so sorry if it took sooooo long! π^π]

[Enjoy ~]

_____

It's this dream again...

It's this dream where I'm running away with someone. I'm holding their trembling, cold hand.

The way they run was slow, limping and injured.

Injured?

Their right leg is covered in a cloth that's already soaked in mud and blood and rain.

Rain...

It's raining heavily. Where is this? Where am I?

A forest? Jungle?

So many trees, so many tall trees... This reminds me of a rain forest yet at the same time, it reminds me of somewhere I know...

"Leave me!"

I turn back to the person who I'm running away with; their breathing was heavy, their face was pale, their lips were trembling and their body ache.

Who are you again? Why do I feel so sad and scared? What are we

running from that you had to tell me to leave you?

What is it?

***Who** is it?*

"No..." My lips moved on it's own "I'm not leaving you! I'm not..."

I sound so desperate.

Just what is this dream?

Why does it feels so real?

Bang!

Guns, I hear guns at the distant... Am I in a war? But if I am I shouldn't be wearing this thin dress...

"Run!"

Suddenly, I was pushed down by the man I'm holding and a set of bullets started firing at us.

Who's shooting...?

"Haaaa... Haaaa... Shit! my leg" they hissed in pain.

Their trembling, they must be in pure agony...

Why can't I say anything? I want to comfort them, I want to stop the bleeding yet I'm paralyzed. I've never felt this way, I trained my whole life and I've seen blood all the time yet...

This scene before me is somehow terrifying... This person must be so important to me...

"We have to hurry if we want to escape! Come on!"

This time they lead the way; they grabbed my hand and continued running even if there were people shooting us from behind.

Until one bullet buries itself on their back causing for both of us to trip

and fall to a slope - we rolled down and landed on a small cliff.

I immediately got up on my feet as I saw them almost rolling at the edge, about to fall.

"No! Wake up! —!"

Why can't I hear their name?! I'm sure my lips moved to say their name yet why can't I hear it?!

"Wake up! Wake up!!" I screamed and screamed as I run towards their direction.

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"Ah!" I jolted wide awake from my seat.

I groaned a little and held my head when I felt a sudden throbbing pain. Beads of sweat were forming, falling and my breathing was fast and rapid.

Just now, it felt like I had a dream, a very realistic dream yet I can't seem to remember.

What was it again? It was some sort of a repeat of a dream I had before...

"Ngh..."

Can't do it, can't wrap my head around it, I can't remember... Maybe it wasn't important.

I look back to the desk I just slept on, where there were few books stacked on top of each other and my notebook in the middle of it.

Scribbled notes, guides and such are all written there.

Ah right, I'm in the library, I was studying for the upcoming spring exam and must've fallen asleep.

"My head hurts..."

I sigh and closed my notebook before returning all the books I took on their original place.

As I went back to the table, I placed my notebook in my bag and zip it close. I flinched a little when the strong window almost shake from the heavy downpour of the rain.

"Even Pangaea isn't safe from nature" I muttered to myself as I stare at the dark gray sky, with no sign of sunlight.

I hang my bag on my back and neatly arranged the chair before heading my way out of the library.

But as I was one the way, I saw someone on the corner of my eyes; they were groaning and mumbling, obviously they were having a hard time.

"That's... Brazil"

He was also studying but there were even more books stacked up around his table while he release this depressing aura.

He must be having a rough time.

Brazil then sighed and softly threw his pen on the table and leaned back on his chair, letting his head fall back and his arm cover his eyes.

"Hmm..."

I slowly approached Brazil and tap his arm that's placed on his face "oh, hey philipia, what's up?"

I grinned "hello brazil, you seem to be having a hard time" I said and look over to his table and notebook.

Brazil chuckled "was it obvious?" He asked.

I nodded "unfortunately, yes"

I look over to his notebook and noticed a paper sticking out; curiosity got the best of me and I pulled it out, unraveling it and it seems to be his quiz paper from earlier.

"Ah! No don't!"

He snatched the paper away but I already saw what it is.

"Ugh, yeah, I'm dumb, I got a 0/50" he spoke and embarrassingly folded the paper.

"That was the quiz from professor Reich, isn't it?" I asked.

"Yeah, it was"

"It was about politics and any leader who's already in the political world would be able to answer any of it, unless you don't implement that on your country?"

Brazil placed the paper on his notebook and closed it "that's what Norway and Greece said as well but, I guess I can't help it when I'm dumb"

I know for sure his country is rich and famous, and his economy is very stable but why couldn't he answer it?

"Anyways, is there anything you want?" He asked again.

"Oh, right. I was wondering if you'd like to have a group study with me" I offered.

Brazil stared at me for a second before nodding "sure! A group study with the academy's second placer? Why the hell not?" He giggled.

"Then, how about tonight? In my dorm, we'll study with the others too" I smiled.

"Sure, I'll be there at 7"

I waved goodbye to Brazil who decided to stay for a little longer in the library.

As for me, I decided to head to the garden room to tend for the flowers I'm assigned in.

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4 : 34 pm [North Wing garden]

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"Yahallo~ philis"

I look up to see Ukraine hovering behind me.

"Hello, Ukraine" I greeted.

"Want me to help you?" He offered and I nodded, an extra hand is better than two.

Ukraine then started watering the flowers while I trim the dead leaves.

"I heard you're going to have a group study with Brazil?" He asked.

"Oh, yes. Would you like to join u--"

"Of course I will!"

I chuckled as I placed the cutter in the basket and Ukraine closed the faucet "while we're at it, let's have some snacks too!" He cheered as we walk inside the hallway.

"That sounds good" I replied.

"A good snack is better while studying, I heard the spring examination is no joke" he added.

True, the spring examination is hard, harder than it was last year, even though I purposely didn't perfected it, it was still hard.

I'm so glad I studied like crazy.

"But I'm sure everyone will do great" I said.

Ukraine hums "of course they will, we're going to have a group study so I'm sure they'll pass since you're there to teach us!" He beams.

I giggled and nodded "I'll do my best"

"Yay!! Then! Let's buy lots and lots of snacksss!"

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6 : 45 pm [dorm 1]

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Brazil, Canada, France, Norway, Estonia, Finland, Brunei, Israel, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Ukraine all came to our room.

Canada, France and Ukraine were on the floor while the rest sat on the sofa.

"Ah! Wait a minute! The snacks!" Ukraine spoke and sprang up from his seat.

"Snacks? Why do we still need snacks?" Canada berate.

Ukraine then stomps his feet and puff his cheek "shaddup! Me and philis decided to have snacks on this group study!"

"Great! I'll go with you!" Canada smiled and stood up as well. His mood changed immediately, he must really care for Ukraine.

France sighed and leaned back on the sofa from the floor "just hurry

up" he said.

"Ya know what I want!" Malaysia raised his hand.

"The same bread, as usual" Indonesia added.

Estonia then got up and raised his hand "can I come?" He asked with anticipation.

"Estonia, you can't" Ukraine said, placing his hand on both hips "you're blind!"

"So???? I wanna come!!!!" He demanded and kept tugging on Finland's sleeve.

"You should stay Estonia, we'll come back immediately" I said and he stopped, obediently sitting down and nodding his head.

"I'll go with you, angel" Israel raises his hand and stood up from the sofa.

Ever since that conversation with Israel, it's been a little awkward, but it slowly died down and we were back to normal.

I really didn't know what came over me and why I just brushed his feelings aside like it's nothing.

I must be the most foolish and most insensitive friend to have...

"Okay let's go philis!" Ukraine then grabbed my wrist and pulled me out of the room while Canada and Israel followed behind us.

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The school store was near the dorm yet, Ukraine and Canada didn't like buying there for many reasons (what they said) and we decided to buy outside the academy instead.

"I know there's a store called 7/12 here" Canada said as we followed him.

"You mean, that?" I pointed the store across the road.

"Yep, that"

We went inside the store ad there were two or three people inside, including the person at the counter. Ukraine and Canada then went ahead to grab anything that looks like a junk food and sweets while Israel kept following behind me and hold the things that I chose.

"Aren't you gonna buy anything?" I asked him.

Israel shakes his head and smiled "I only came here to be with you" he replied.

"Why?"

He chuckled and took one candy bar and pressed it on my lips "because that's what people who are in love does" he smiled.

I know what he means yet I can't grasp the feeling of what he meant.

In love: such a term I can't understand. I can understand literature, advance math, politics, rules, laws, science, physics...

How can I return his feelings when I can't even understand what I receive?

"I see" I simply said and turn to my heel to find other more.

Can people really say they love someone easily? Is it that simple? Is it that common? Is it really something you're supposed to have?

"No it's not. Just forget about it..."

I blinked a few times when I suddenly hear Filip.

Ahh, he's right, maybe it's best to forget about and don't mind it.

"It'll just be a hindrance"

I see. It's a hindrance, it's not something you're supposed to have when you're occupied.

"I see..." I mumbled as I stared at the bag of candy I'm holding.

"Philis, you got everything?" Ukraine asked which snapped me back.

I turn to him and nodded "yes, I got everything" I replied and noticed that his basket was already full of stuffs.

Canada almost bought the whole contents of the fridge in the store; luckily, Israel was with us to stop him.

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"Ahhhhh! I wanna hurry up and eat these!" Ukraine spoke.

"We haven't even started the group study yet you already want to eat these?" Israel berated.

The two then started to argue Canada the bottle of syrup.

It looks sweet and unhealthy.

"Shouldn't syrups be best with pancakes or waffles?" I asked.

"Yeah but, I sometimes do this whenever I get the chance to buy on–"

– Squish.

"Squish...?" I blinked a few times and stop to look down my left foot that is on top of someone who's on the ground, unconscious.

"Ahh! A dead person!" Ukraine exclaimed and hid behind Israel.

"What in the heavens?" Israel added.

Canada simply just stood besides me and stare at the unconscious person.

Wait, more than a person, this is a kid!

"Oh my goodness!" I said and crouched down "a-are you okay?"

I held his small shoulder and faced him to us when something fell from his bag.

"It's a keychain" Israel said as he picked it up "a keychain flag of... Brazil"

"Mmm...pa...pa.."

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"Brazil!!!"

"Ah! What the fu--"

"Is this your kid?!" Ukraine exclaimed as he points at the small kid that Israel is carrying.

Brazil looks over to us and perked up "huh?! How did he get here?!" He said and stood up, walking towards Israel and took the little boy to his arms.

"We saw the kid unconscious on the ground near the academy" Canada explained as he got inside and placed all the things we bought on the coffee table.

"More importantly, why do you have a kid?!" Ukraine demands.

Brazil sighs "cause I have one obviously, is it that big of a problem?" He said and carried the boy out of the room.

"Where are you going?" Finland asked.

"I'll just put him in my room, I'll join you guys next time"

He isn't going to join us? But the spring examination is near...

Hmm...

"Wait" I called and he stopped "you can put him in my bed instead, so you don't have to skip this group study" I offered.

Brazil thinks for a second, he looks at his son and back at us and replied "okay... If you don't mind"

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"Sorry for the intrusion" I said and peeked my head inside my room.

Brazil was sitting on the side while his son was asleep after a bath from his dad.

Such a warm scenario.

"Here" I said and placed the basin with warm water and a clean towel "when we carried him, Israel noticed that he was burning up" I added and gently placed my palm on his forehead.

"Thanks" he said softly "to be honest, I kind of spoiled him a little bit so it's kind of expected for him to come here even if he's alone"

I soften my gaze at Brazil; such a strong person he is. Not only does he have a kid but he's also doing his best to try and make his country prosperous by getting a good grade in this academy.

I smiled and dip the towel to the warm water and twist it to drain the excess before folding it and placed it on their forehead "I'm sure any parent would do the same" I said "It just shows how much you

love your son"

Brazil nodded "I do, I love him very much that imagining without him is unbearable..."

"I can tell; but I can also tell that he's not your..." My voice trails off as I tap my right shoulder.

His eyes widen "ah, right... Yes, he is..."

Country leaders doesn't just have the gift to possess skills, but we are also gifted to have sharp eyes.

And our eyes cannot be betrayed when it comes to true royals or not.

And Brazil, his son. Is a commoner turned into royal with a man-made birthmark through baptism.

When a country leader baptized a non royal or commoner with their name, their voice, their marks. A birthmark will be created on the commoners back like any leader does.

But those things comes with a price.

Half of your marks will disappear and be transferred to the one they baptized to make a commoner make it seem like to have a blood of a royal.

And when they start it, it has to continue. Unlike real royals - from what I read - they have to be baptized yearly unlike us who just have to be baptized depending on the maturity of our age and time.

To simply put it; it's like a royal adoption.

"His name is brasilià, I made him the new capital city... Of my country" Brazil spoke, he sighs and stood up after tucking brasilià in "but anyways, let's go? The others are waiting"

I nodded and followed behind Brazil.

I glance one last time to the sleeping boy before closing the door

behind me.

If only I was baptized for the last time, then maybe I could heal him. But Tito said it's not the right time yet although he will, we just can't let brother know or else...

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12 : 35 am

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I yawned and leaned my head back on the sofa and stared at the coffee table now full of opened notebooks and scattered snacks.

I didn't even realize the time and that everyone has fallen asleep.

Some of them were asleep and leaning on to each other still holding a book or notebook.

Estonia and Finland both fell asleep on both my shoulders, how cute.

"Hey" Brunei whispered as he stood up and stretch his arms "you're awake"

I smiled and nodded "I guess we all studied too hard we didn't even notice the time" I said when Estonia wraps his hands around my arm and leans even closer, softly snoring and mouth slightly agape.

"Studied too hard or ate too hard? Look at all these snacks" Brunei stated and picked up all the plastics and empty boxes scattered on the floor "let's clean up first then go back to sleep"

I nodded in response; slowly removing Estonia's hand from me, I gently placed his head against Finland so that they are leaning to each other.

I stood up and stretch my arms backwards before following Brunei towards the kitchen.

"Here's yours"

He gave me a garbage bag and took one for him as well.

I quietly picked up any trash that I could see while separating the ones that still have contents, although Brunei didn't even try to be careful and just picked up all the trash even if he's making a noise and bumping some of them with his feet.

I sigh and continued doing my work.

"Hmm.." Singapore groans and sat up while adjusting his glasses "what is this?" He spoke.

"Hello Singapore, sorry, did I wake you?" I smiled before taking the empty box of biscuits on his lap "you can go back to sleep, I'll give you guys some blanket too if you like"

Singapore simply stared at me with half lidded eyes before leaning in close and said "why are you still so breathtaking even in my dreams?"

Breathtaking? Is he having a hard time breathing?

"Breath slowly, Singapore, it could be dangerous" I said and placed my hand on his chest to help him ease up a little.

Singapore blinks a few times; I can tell he's half asleep, must be because he woke up after a tiring hours.

"I wanna kiss you... Again" he added, leaning even closer before Brunei shoves his hand between me and Singapore, making him kiss the back of brunei's hand instead.

"Go back to sleep you four eyes!" Brunei exclaimed and Singapore leaned back and fell asleep again.

I blinked a few times before touching my lips.

Why do they like to kiss?

"Hmm" I hummed.

"You now, there's a limit to being naive and oblivious Philip" he said.

Naive? Oblivious? Am I really unaware of my surroundings and lack of experience?

"Sorry"

Brunei sighs and shakes his head "let's just finish this so that we can sleep now, I guess you're still in a daze too"

Brunei and I continued to clean up and placed everyone to sleep in the living room by moving the coffee table at the side and placed a bunch of comforters and pillows in place of it.

"Sorry angel, I'm too drunk with soft drinks that I couldn't help you with cleaning up" Israel spoke while he cover his eyes with his forearm and laying down.

I smiled and tuck them in.

"It's okay, go back to sleep" I ushered and pats his head.

Everyone was finally sleeping soundly when me and Brunei finally managed to clean everything up.

"I'm gonna head back to my bed, what about you? Isn't that kid sleeping in your room?" Brunei said.

"It's okay, I'll sleep on the floor" I suggest "besides, it's not everyday I get to see a kid"

Brunei didn't have a choice but to nod on my words before going back to his room "well then, good night and good morning"

"Sweet dreams" I replied and went to my door.

As I slowly twist the doorknob open, the boy was still in the same

position as earlier.

Approaching him, I noticed the towel was still warm, Brazil must've came back to check on him earlier; how fortunate this boy is.

I went ahead and took a short shower before changing into my pajamas.

Taking the extra comforter and pillow, I laid down and wrap the blanket above me, covering me, keeping me warm from the cold spring Pangaea has.

I miss the days where I would use both the air-condition and electric fan at the same time before.

Those times where I wasn't... A spy... Yet...

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This dream again...

"Hey, don't worry, whatever happens, I'm here..."

Who are you? I know you yet I can't tell who you are, I can't see your face, it's covered in a black mist.

"I know, ——. I'm just worried for you, I mean, what you did back there was pretty reckless but I'm still glad you came to get me" I replied with a tone of relief and happiness.

The person chuckled and pats my head "it was worth it, although it was kind of messy, I'm not really good at making plans" they replied.

"How about — and —? You said they are here to get us?"

They nodded "yep, and I'm sure we'll both get out alive, those idiots are stubborn anyways"

I giggled and felt a wave of relief wash over me "I'm glad..." I said and pulled my knees close to my chest "I'm so glad I'm out of that hell... Everyday was hell"

It's warm, the fire we made was keeping us warm because (again) it was raining.

We were in a cave too, it's dark yet it feels like we'll be safe here... For now.

***Bang* !**

Huh?! Why... Why am I here?! Weren't I just at a cave with the person I was with? Why am I here in the same cliff that this person almost fell from?

What is happening? What is this dream?!

I jolted when a ring erupted this heavy, and loud atmosphere.

I frantically searched for the source of the sound and it was coming from the pocket of the person who's unconscious before me.

"Hello?!"

" Hello?! philipia?! Where are you?! Are you with — right now?!"

A familiar voice echoes on the other side of the phone.

"Shit! Keep shooting them off!" *They yelled and a group of guns not far from us was heard.*

So I really am in a war?

"Where are you right now?!"

I can't answer, I'm paralyzed, I'm so scared of being caught...

"I'm already here with —! We've been caught but don't worry! We're okay!"

I was about to answer but the vall started to reconnect, the signal here must be bad. ..

Oh no..

I flinched when felt a group of people behind me.

My body began to tense up as I slowly turn my head around.

" N-no ..." I stuttered as I cover the person who's still unconscious, behind me "no please....don't kill them please..."

I begged, my voice quiver with every word I say.

"No!"

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"Wake up miss"

I open my eyes wide open and was greeted by a little boy who's staring at me with a stoic expression "miss, are you having a nightmare?" He asked and poked my left cheek.

Nightmare? Oh right, I was dreaming of something - something really dangerous and really...

"Hmm..."

I slowly sat up and checked the time; *5 : 25 am [Tue]*

Usually I'd wake up around 4, but I guess the group study really did take a lot of energy than I thought.

"Miss, I'm hungry" the boy (brasilià) said while rubbing his stomach.

I giggled and nodded "oh, yes of course but, are you feeling better now?" I asked as I placed my palm on his forehead.

Brasilià nodded "thank you miss, I'm sorry I gave you trouble" he said, and even with a stoic expression, I can tell his apology was sincere.

How adorable.

I giggled and stretch my arms backwards "let's wake your father up with a breakfast then?"

After taking a shower, Brasilià then wore his clothes from yesterday that I washed last night.

I wore my uniform with an added jacket that J gave me a week ago.

When we exit the room, Brunei was already cooking at the kitchen (I assume) and the sofa was back to what it was.

Everyone has probably woke up now and went to their rooms.

"Good morning, angel" I turn back to see Israel.

"Good morning Israel" I greeted back.

He smiled and turn to brasilià who held my sleeve "good morning, sir Israel" Brasilià greeted with a mutter.

Israel laughed and pat his head "relax kid, I don't bite" he said and went ahead to the lounge.

"Good morning, philipia" Malaysia yawned who came out of his room "and good morning to you too, little Brazil" he added, walking pass us.

As we got to the dining area, Brunei came out of the kitchen carrying a plate of our breakfast "oh, you're awake, what do you want little guy? Eggs or?"

Brasilià points the bacon and sandwich on the table "that" he said.

Brunei chuckled and winked "got it, your dad will be waiting for you downstairs so don't worry and feel comfortable around us"

I led brasilià to take a sit next to me and a new chair that Indonesia provided before going back to the kitchen.

"Who is this?"

I look over to Germany who sat on his seat.

"He's brasilià, brazil's son" I introduce.

"Hmmm, I did hear he has a son but I didn't think he'd be a comm--"

I immediately covered Germany's mouth and smiled at him "right, it's really common for leaders to have a kid now, right?"

I stared at Germany intensely, hoping my telepathic message could reach him.

Brasilià tilts his head to the side, clueless on what Germany was about to say.

Thank goodness...

Germany blinked a few times and nodded as he looked at me a bit surprised.

Slowly removing my hand, he cleared his throat "I apologise, goddess" he said and fixed his glasses "but yes, you're right, as always, all hail the goddess!"

Israel sighs "he's at it again..." He muttered.

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As we got wenr down at the first floor, Brazil was waiting at the front. He immediately saw us and he raised his hand.

"Brasilià" he called and brasilià immediately ran up to him.

"Papa!" he called monotonously but with a certain sincerity.

He instantly carried Brasilià and the boy wrapped his little legs around his dad.

"Thanks for taking care of him guys" Brazil smiled and carried Brasilià who then placed their head on his left shoulder.

"No problem" Brunei said.

Brazil then turns to me and smiled which I returned with one as well.

"Well then, see you around brasilià" I waved and he waved back to us.

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I let out a deep sigh when I finally arrived in my room and sat on my chair.

While I waited outside the dorm building, I asked for a helicopter to take brasilià back to my country.

Not only that, I gave a good talk to my girlfriend who's supposed to take care of brasilià and not let him come here no matter what it is.

"Rough day?" Norway asked as he sat on the empty seat besides me "you look like someone who got beaten, *mentally*"

"Yeah, sounds about right cause *I am* beaten mentally" I replied.

Norway chuckled "that's fine bud, I'm sure after everything will be sunshine's and rainbows"

I scoff "really? Sunshines and rainbows? Great, thanks, that motivated me" I rolled my eyes.

"Hey, not everyone is having it good, but look at me, I'm still looking at the bright side" he said

I turn to Norway who has this idiotic look of a grin plastered on his face "easy for you to say, I don't even think you have a problem"

Norway shake his head "I do too, I'm about to get married"

I perked up "oh really? Am I gonna be the best man?" I point myself.

Norway laughed sarcastically "funny"

"No seriously, when's the wedding?" I asked.

He simply shrugged "who knows, the girl will probably decide when"

The girl? Wait, don't tell me Norway is getting married to a girl he doesn't know?

"Arranged marriage? I thought leaders who are in a political marriage will be able to cut it off when they attend here?" I sat up straight.

Norway sighs "I have many reason why I can't"

This is the first time I see Norway looking depress about something.

"Take a seat now everyone" the professor came in and everyone immediately went to their seat.

Norway then winks at me before going back to his.

Sheesh, he changes his mood really easy, I wonder how he's able to do that.

Must decades of training of keeping his problems to himself.

But then again, what he said was right, I guess I judge too easily.

Everyone has their own problems, but it's their problem, not mine, I'm minding my own.

I just have to graduate and get good grades in order to make my country prosper.

If I can't, how am I going to give brasilià a good life when I'm no longer here?

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3 : 35 pm

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Useless. Everything is useless, even if I studied like crazy last night. Why are my scores still lower than average?!

"Damn it!" I shout and slam my hand on the wall as I crumpled the papers "fucking... Damn it!"

I sighed and slumped back down. Am I really this worthless? Am I really this... Stupid?

I did everything I could yet why isn't it enough?

"Yo"

I flinched and swiftly look back where Canada and France are.

These strong and big countries have it all... What I don't, they have.

"You okay there?" Canada asked with a concerned expression.

I forced a smiled and nodded before standing up, dusting my pants "I'm fine" I replied.

"Really? You look kind of, *pissed* off" France stated.

If you know I'm pissed off, why bother bothering me?

"I'm fine" I said again and walk pass them, not even glancing back

for their reaction.

Last night, at the group study, all Canada ever did was eat snack and screw around and it was hard to concentrate.

I wanted to tell him off but I just couldn't and since canada is a strong country, it's best to get on his good side.

As I walk in the hallway of the east wing building, I saw Norway and Greece talking to philipia.

Norway and Greece; makes me wonder why am I even hanging around them...

Am I even worthy to stand next close to those two? What is this unsatisfied feeling? It's so uncomfortable and just irritating...

But I became even more irritated when my phone started to ring. I answered it and the all too familiar voice spoke on the other side.

"Brazil, can you give me a couple of money? I need to buy the new bag"

"No, and if you want that bag, go and spend your own money" I hissed.

"Ugh, seriously? Whatever"

And it ended, just like that and it will always be like this.

My girlfriend Piaui, was once a sweet and charming woman, until we started to live together and took in brasilià; that's when she started to change, she started to spend what she usually doesn't spend.

She never liked jewelry before, but now she's obsess with it.

She become materialistic, sometimes even using brasilià if she has to.

I simply can't break up with her or else no one will look after brasilià. I know my secretary Rio can do it but, he has too many things to do to and I feel bad to ask him.

And I can't let brasilià feel what I felt where I grew up with no mother... I took him in because I had no choice.

"It's raining heavily again..."

That's right, in this same weather, was the day I adopted brasilià, who was given to me by a woman who's face and name I don't know...

Whoever she was, I'm grateful. I'm really, really grateful...

I wish I could meet her again.

"Papa!"

I halted and look ahead of me where the academy gate is.

Brasilià was here, *again*.

"What are you doing here?! Didn't I tell you not to come anymore?" I said as I walk up to him yet he gaze at me with his usual stoic expression.

"I don't like home, home was cold without Papa" he replied "and auntie Piaui was out again"

I groaned "okay, okay, let's calm down first" I said and carried him inside the building since it was still raining "how did you manage to get here by yourself?" I asked after placing him down on the floor and take my handkerchief out.

"Auntie gave me a ride in the helicopter"

I sigh "she's using the royal helicopter for something useless again?"

He nodded.

I didn't say anything anymore and continue drying him with the handkerchief (he wasn't that wet anyways).

"Papa, why don't you break up with her? She's obviously wasting money and always ordering everyone around like she's a royal

herself" he said.

I can't possibly answer that.

"I just can't, and you won't even understand why"

"I would, don't worry papa"

Such a strong kid.

I chuckled and pat his head "You may say that but still, I can't possibly let a kid know such grown up matters"

Brasilià looks down and fiddle with his thumbs "you mean, why you can't break up with her? Or about me being adopted?"

I flinched, my heart rate faster than average "w-where did you hear that?"

Brasilià bit his lower lip "auntie told me, that I'm adopted, and that I was never a real royal, I just became royal because of the baptism..." He answered.

That bitch...

I placed both my hands on his shoulders "listen here brasilià, whatever she said, don't beli--"

"It's true anyways, right? I'm not Papa's real son?"

My hands felt heavier than they were, the world around me was spinning yet brasilià still looked calm.

His piercing blue eyes that looked nothing like my brown ones, sees through me.

"Papa?"

"I..."

What am I suppose to say?! What am I suppose to do?! Why did she had to tell him something that he shouldn't know?!

"So what if you're adopted?"

We both turn to the owner of the voice; it was Canada again, with his two brothers behind him: Australia and New Zealand.

Why the hell are they here?

"Even if you are, since the leader himself baptized you you're still a royal one way or another" he said as he crouched down and pat brasilià's left shoulder.

"Yeah, it doesn't really matter" Australia added.

Stop.

Go away, please...

This is between me and him...

I don't need your sympathy, *we* don't need your sympathy.

Just the fact that he's saying that really pisses me off, I'm not like this. I've never been like this...

A strong country like him with a pure blood of royal leaders, has no right to say such a thing...

"Yeah kid, don't worry about what other people s–"

"Shut up..." I muttered, cutting Australia off before they all turn to me "shut up... You wouldn't understand, you wouldn't understand because it has never happen to you! You strong countries have no right to tell us what matters or not!" I yelled.

"H-hey, calm down" New Zealand said, but I glared at him, I glared at all of them.

I gritted my teeth, I noticed they were a few students nearby who all ran away and left yet some of them stayed to watch "tch, come on, brasilià" I said and grabbed his wrist.

"But papa"

"I said let's go!"

Brasilià flinched from my sudden raise of voice "no! Papa is always like this! You're always insecure about our country! You're always in a hurry to make it better!" He yelled back.

Brasilià is talking back at me?

"You're always in fear of the future when you're only in the present! Papa wake up already!"

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While walking in the campus, there were a bunch of students gathered in one place, they were whispering and muttering to each other.

I stand on the tip of my feet to see what the commotion was and saw Canada, Australia, NZ, Brazil and... Brasilià?

He's here again?

"What happened?" I asked myself before walking to the side to get closer and bet a better look.

"Wake up already!"

Everyone suddenly gasped and I look up to see brasilià looking at the side and brazil's hand slightly raised.

Did he just, slapped brasilià?

"Whoah, what the hell Brazil?!" Canada exclaimed and didn't hesitate to grab brazil's collar who also didn't hesitate to fight back.

"Oh no!"

I tried to run towards them but people suddenly started to gather to stop the two leaders from fighting.

What happened to Brazil? He's never been like this, he's always that happy and cheerful man playing games with Norway and Greece.

Even if it's the pressure and stress for the upcoming spring exam, this is still too much.

I tried to get a better look and search for brasilià instead but I saw him ran out of the academy "brasilià!" I called and chased after him.

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I think I lost sight of brasilià, I'm pretty sure he ran around here.

I stop to catch my breath while bending down, the cold and the rain wasn't helping, not only that, it was a bit hard to see, it's especially harder when in the street, the blinding light of the cars and the bustling people were more confusing than it is.

"E-excuse me, have you seen a little boy?" I asked a random person but they shook their heads.

Same with the next person, and the next one, and the next, until I've ran out of option.

Just what is Brazil going through right now?

I perked up when my phone started ringing.

"Hello north?"

"Where are you?"

"I'm outside the academy, brasilià ran away after the commotion between Canada and Brazil"

"Yeah, they're in the clinic, these two idiots are really nothing but trouble"

"I see, that's great"

"Anyways, I'll ask someone to look for brasilià, but you have to come back, there's a storm coming, it's not safe"

A storm...

I look up at the gray sky, it's only 3 pm yet it almost looked like midnight.

This rainy day makes me feel nostalgic.

Or perhaps, a deja Vu...

" Philipia ? You still there?"

"Huh? Oh yeah, I'm here! But I'm sorry I can't return yet!"

Somehow, the rain started to get stronger and louder.

"What? Philipia, stop being stubborn and just come back, I'll send someone else instead"

I swiftly turn to my right when I saw (I think) brasilià run.

"I'm sorry north! But I can't stay still knowing there's a storm coming and there's a little boy on a run!" With that, I turned the phone off and continued running.

"Please be safe brasilià, please be safe..."

I keep muttering those words, yet the worry wouldn't die down.

Weird, I've only get to talk to him yesterday yet it feels like I've known him longer.

It feels like, there's somehow a connection between me and brasilià, I just can't point out what it is.

I stop to look at the distant; I saw him, sobbing and walking on the side of the road.

"Brasilià!" I called and ran up to him.

He stop to turn to me, eyes swollen and body drenched wet.

He gritted his teeth and ran again "please don't follow me miss!" He yelled when he started running on full sprint.

No... No, no!

"Brasilià! Stop! Stop! The road! You'll get hi--"

Time was somehow slow.

Ahhh, it feels like I've been in this situation... But instead of me who's about to be hit, it was a little boy who's new in the political world, a boy who's barely lived half his life.

I can't let this happen!

"BRASILIÀ!"

The sound of the ear piercing screech of the wheels was what I could only hear.

The car immediately halted yet it hit another car and the one behind it as well, until everything was now a mess and a faint smoke from multiple cars were oozing out.

People were now starting to gather.

"No..." My knees suddenly felt weak "n-no..." My voice quiver, my body tremble.

No this can't happen...

"Brasilià!" I called again before approaching the accident, I look around to see any body, or a corpse, anyone at all.

Yet there was none except...

"Norway?"

He groaned and sit up while holding Brasilià who's unconscious in his arm "phew, that was a close call"he said before he noticed me "oh, hey there" he smiled.

How...?

"Did you find him? Oh" I look up again and saw Greece with Athena resting on his forearm.

"Let's get out of here, I think we caused a serious traffic accident"

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"Damn, it's raining hard..." I look outside my window and there was nothing in sight.

Just pitch black and probably the cold that could freeze anyone.

Knock... knock...

"Hmm?" I stood up from my seat and went ahead to open the door.

And as expected, the cold air immediately entered " w-who is it?" I shivered as I speak.

I stop and blinked a few times, opening the door wider. There was a woman dressed in pitch black dress, a veil hovering over their eyes and nose.

"Can I help you?" I asked.

Normally, people would be in their houses, and I even made sure that all homeless people had a temporary shelter from the storm.

" P-please " The voice was soft, light yet pleading "please take him..." She removed a piece of cloth from what she was carrying and showed me a baby, sleeping soundly.

"Oh, would you like me to call someone to--"

My hand was suddenly grabbed by this woman, even if she was wearing

a glove, it was still cold and wet.

"Only you can... T-take care of him please, I'm running out of ti ..." She suddenly groaned and the baby began to cry " p-please !" She pleaded again.

"Sir, is there a problem?" One of my helpers asked as they came out of their rooms.

I waved my hand "none" I answered and turn back to the woman again.

She was biting her lower lip that blood was oozing out, she seems to be in pain too.

"Miss, if you need help I can help, but I can't take the bab--"

"Brazil! Please!"

That caught me off guard, nobody has ever said my name with such authority.

"Only you can do it..." She said again before she groaned in pain again.

I can see tears sliding down her cheeks now "please..." Again, she pleaded.

I hesitantly took the baby from her trembling and cold body.

The cloth that was wrapped around the baby was somehow dry, I can tell she protected the baby from getting wet from this rain.

"Okay, okay, I'm taking him in, but please miss, come in"

She shook her head "I'm sorry, I can't..." She said and took a step back.

"Ah, wait, miss! There's a storm outside" I warned before the helpers finally came up behind me.

"His name is brasilià... Take care of him great country leader Brazil, and may the heavens, bless you" she smiled before turning to her heel and disappearing in the pitch black rain.

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That was the last time I ever saw that woman, yet she still lingers in my head, her voice was blurry yet the image of her smile was still vivid.

I sigh.

Why am I remembering that time right now?

"Hey"

I glance back over my right shoulder where America and new Zealand is standing by the door.

Currently, me and Canada were placed in separate clinic, I'm in the second floor while he's at the third.

"What is it?" I replied, looking back down at my hand that is bandaged and band aid on my knuckles and back of the hand.

America sighs and stepped closer, he sat behind me on the same bed "I'll have to apologize if my big bro has a short temper" he said.

"I don't need your – or his apology"

"What a stubborn fellow you are" he chuckled "anyways, I only came here to tell you that" he added before standing up.

"It's your turn bro" I heard him say to New Zealand.

There was a short moment of silence before I hear him drag a chair and place it before me, he turn it the wrong way and sat like a stupid looking gangster using the back rest into a front rest "you know, I've never seen someone who has enough balls to punch back Canada" he spoke.

I rolled my eyes and leaned back, using my hands as a support "so you're telling me to feel proud?"

He scoff "kind of, but at the same, I'm here to tell you what a douche you are to slap your kid in front of many people"

I clicked my tongue and look away "I have limits too"

"And a parent shouldn't go wild in public to embarrassed their kid, what of kind of impact do you think it will give him when he grows up?"

"Are you here to educate me or something?"

"I'm here to tell you on what you did was uncalled for!" His voice echoed in the quiet room.

And after that, the only sound we can hear is the rain hitting the window from outside.

I sighed "you don't get it, you don't understand anything!"

Suddenly, New Zealand grabbed my collar.

"Why wouldn't we? I know your memories aren't erased, I know you can remember your days of war and agony, cause we also have those too!" He said through gritted teeth "you think, that what we have now were because we were only sitting down leisurely?! You think we didn't have slavery? You didn't think we had guns, blood, death and wars?!"

New Zealand then release me and pushed me back down "just because your country is falling behind slightly, doesn't mean you get to have the right to say we wouldn't understand... Because all of us, **all** leaders went through shit! Not just you!"

A single tear then fell from his left eye, he immediately removed his glasses and wiped it away "if you think we're insensitive just because we don't know the situation in your country, well you're insensitive to assume we didn't suffer to get where we are, this country of ours are prosperous enough through sweat, blood, sacrifices and tears"

I gripped on the sheet of the bed and look down.

Just what am I doing...

He wore his glasses again and took a deep breath, "anyways, that's...

That's what I wanted to say, and don't mention any of it to America either, his memories are heavily suppressed..." he added before finally leaving the room, leaving me alone to let all his words sink in.

Maybe I was just jealous, and maybe brasilià was right too...

"I really am insecure"

I sighed and look down to my palm.

These palm, these hands were the ones that decided to take in brasilià, the ones that fed him, took care of him, bathe him, comfort him, and the one to slap and hurt him...

I'm stupid enough to think he'll always be the obedient kid, who am I kidding? Kids grow up, and their minds become mature.

I guess he was old enough to be aware of what was happening... He isn't oblivious to the world anymore.

Hey, the woman who gave him to me... Why were you so sure I'd take care of him? Why were you so certain that, I'm trustworthy enough to take care of him and love him?

"How are you so sure..."

Just who are you?

"Brazil"

I flinched when a somehow familiar voice called me from behind.

"Philipia" I muttered.

She was drenched, huffing heavily and face flushed red "philipia, why are you--"

I didn't get to finish my sentence when her hand suddenly met my cheek.

There was a sharp sound and sharp pain.

"Brazil... Haaaa..." She bend down a little to catch her breath "that's for brasilià"

Is everyone really going to scold me? But it somehow makes me happy that many people care for brasilià, makes me feel relieved that there are people I can count on when the time comes where I'm no longer here.

"You shouldn't have done that in front of Canada too..." she added.

I perked up and look at her "what?"

She stood up straight and took a deep breath "Canada, was beaten by his father Mr. UK, so slapping brasilià in front of him triggered something in him... So" she fiddled with her thumbs "so don't ever hurt brasilià again..."

I soften my gaze and look down "yeah, my bad..."

"Brasilià is okay now, he's at our room and if you want to talk to him or if you're ready, you can just tell me..."

I nodded.

"And brazil... " She called and I hummed in response.

"Your country and mine, are similar, so whatever you're feeling..."

I slowly look up to her.

Similar...?

"I feel it and I know. That feeling of falling behind and everyone improving rapidly... It's scary and it gives me anxiety" She added

"But you see, instead of trying too hard, I'm just doing my best and make my countrymen proud of me..."

Countrymen proud...?

"So you don't have to feel all alone, you don't have to feel like falling behind, if there are things you don't know or beyond your

capacities, don't force it or you'll break" she sniffled as she said those.

Ahhh, her tears are somehow contagious.

The years that I've kept my tears from toppling over has now overflowed because of her.

I was still able to hold myself back from America and New Zealand.

But somehow, seeing her cry - not for me or for brasilià - but for me...

Somehow broke the dam that I've held for so long...

"Seriously, it's like... I stole a candy bar from a kid and I'm being scolded by multiple teachers" I shut my eyes close as the tears finally gave in.

I sobbed loudly and covered my face with my hand, refusing to show such a side of myself.

Philipia cried out loud while I sobbed quietly and whimpered.

Ahhh, I'm tired of trying too hard now...

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A few weeks has passed and the storm finally subsided, luckily there were only minor damages and that Pangaea is ready to offer help to the country that will unfortunately meet up with this storm.

I wouldn't be surprised if my country met up with that storm though, my country has always been prone to disasters to the point I've grown used to it.

It's almost like second nature for us.

"Philipia!"

I stop and turn towards the source of the voice, a small and cute voice that called me "hello brasilià" I greeted and he immediately gave me a hug around my waist.

"como você está?"

[How are you?]

I can somehow understand it a little bit "I'm good?" I replied.

Brasilià blinks a few times before grinning widely and started nuzzling his face on my stomach "quando eu crescer, quero me casar com você!"

Oh, I can no longer understand that. "Uhmm, okay?" I hesitantly replied but it made him happier.

"Hey, I understood that" Spain said behind me with Brazil.

Brasilià sticks out his tongue "bleh"

Spain furrowed his eyebrows "who's kid is this?"

Brazil chuckled and pats his shoulder "he's mine" he said and carried Brasilià "handsome isn't he?" He added.

Spain raised a brow and examined the two "if you ask me, my butt is way good looking than you too" he commented.

After that incident between Brazil and Canada, everything was resolved with a few talks and a heart to heart conversation.

I'm glad Brazil is livelier than before, but that isn't the only good news.

He also passed the spring examination, he was placed on one of the top 10 ranks.

I guess that group study really paid off.

"Oh right, here" I said and take out a small box from my bag

"Canada bought it but he couldn't give it to you personally due to his club"

"What is it?" He asked before taking the small box.

Luckily, Canada was understanding enough and apologize for what he did as well and now the two are closer than before.

"It's a watch" brasilià said and takes it out of the box.

I can tell it's an expensive looking watch even if it looked simple.

"There's a letter inside too" he added and took it out before giving the watch to Brazil and read the letter aloud:

"Sorry bout your watch and congrats on placing top 6"

– canada

I giggled at how thoughtful that was; short yet sincere.

"Oh? You placed top 6?" Spain asked.

Brazil grinned proudly, "yep! How about you?"

Spain chuckled "I'm top 5" he said.

Brazil and brasilià both clapped their hands

"What about you miss philipia?" Brasilià asked - it's cute he still adds the word *miss*

"I'm in the third place" I replied.

"Was it north who got second?"

I nod at Brazil "and since Tethys isn't here, the first one was China" I added.

The three of them reacted in awe.

"As expected from a Chinese" Spain stated.

I'm glad that everyone was able to pass the exam, even Joe was able to pass, last year he had a rough time since he was one of the students that failed.

Joe is smart, I can tell. But I guess the influence of technology got on the way of his studies.

We talked for a while before Brazil was called by Norway and Greece, and as always, Greece still glares at me and still refuses to accept the fact that I'm his fated pair.

Oh dear, I feel a shiver, his glare stabs me even if I'm not looking.

"See you guys later" Brazil waved and so did brasilià who sat on brazil's shoulders.

"See you later miss philipia" brasilià said.

I waved them goodbye before me and Spain decided to return back to our room.

"I'm glad he's okay now, after that incident, everyone was in chaos, north looked like he was about to faint from stress" Spain commented "especially the accident outside the academy"

I chuckled and nod "yeah, I'm really glad that it was resolved, although what Brazil felt was understandable" I responded.

We walked up the second floor stairs "true, but his actions was unreasonable"

I sigh "yeah, but it's all in the past now right? It's best to move on" I said.

Spain looked at me and pats my head "of course" he said "so anyways, now that the spring exam is over, what are you gonna wear in the spring party?"

"Belarus said she'll take care of it" I replied.

"Well I heard France wanted to make you a dress, but I guess it didn't happen huh?" He grinned and I nodded.

"Yeah, although I was thankful"

We both laugh since we know what France felt, I guess he really does love to create clothes and is a fond of fashion.

While walking in the hallway, the person who was walking on the opposite side was none other than professor USSR.

He saw us both and he smirked "good afternoon students, and congratulations you both" he said.

Spain looked uncomfortable since he's avoiding his gaze "thank you, sir" he said.

I shrink between my shoulders and stuttered "t-thank you, sir" I mumbled the last part.

Professor USSR laughed "don't be nervous, I'm only just a teacher here" he said.

Both me and Spain laughed nervously, glancing at each other and feeling that awkward tension.

"But I must say, I'm quite surprised you were on the third rank, miss Philippines"

I cleared my throat that somehow became dry "uhm, I wasn't able to answer everything correctly but I am satisfied with what I accomplished" I answered.

There was a second of silence before he laughed again, his laugh echoing in the - now empty - hallway.

"I see, but I'm still happy for you both, not everyone gets to be on where you are" he added.

Me and Spain both nodded.

"Well then, see you at the spring party" he said one last time before walking pass us. And for a second, my marks showed up and I suddenly felt that pressure between my thighs.

"Huh..."

His footsteps still linger even though it has faded.

"You okay? Damn, even if my memories are back, why am I still terrified?" Spain said as he helped me straighten up.

This pressure, I know I can only feel this whenever I discover someone is my fated pair. But, I'm not in pain or the overwhelming heat wasn't present.

Maybe it was just coincidence...

"I'm okay, I just felt dizzy..."

Yeah, it was just a coincidence. But this was the same feeling I felt when I was in class with professor Reich.

I sighed and took a deep breath.

Wait, is it the same or is it just coincidence?

"You sure you're okay? You look pale" Spain said.

I nodded and reassured him with a smile "yes, I was just really nervous around him"

Spain nodded "yeah, me too, I'll have to tell this to Russia later"

Me and Spain continued our way back to our classroom.

But on the way, I can't help but get a bad feeling on the back of my head. It's better not to ignore such feeling, I'm sure something will definitely happen.

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"Greece, will you control your animal?" I exclaimed when Athena kept flying around my head and her wings would lightly slap my face.

"It's payback for your prank last night" He said.

We're currently in the main garden, sitting underneath the tree. Brazil and brasilià was playing with their phone besides me and to my left is Greece who's reading a book while his bird is fucking around.

"Damn it Greece" I said and tried to slap her wings away, but I try to limit it otherwise I might hurt Athena and we don't want that.

Greece closes his book and turn to me, he whistled and Athena finally stopped and rest on his forearm "don't ever do that stupid prank" he said.

I sneezed and dust my uniform and scarf from her feathers "yeah, yeah" I said "anyways, I saw you glare at philipia again"

Greece rolled his eyes and leaned back on the tree "so? What if I did?"

"Don't you usually go beet red whenever you see her?"

He shake his head in response "n-no"

I raised a brow "uhh huh"

"What do you care? A-and more importantly, aren't you going to get married soon?!"

Ahhh, this guy is changing the subject.

"Yeah, but, I don't even know the girl" I said and leaned back on the tree, staring at the clear blue sky.

Finally, the storm subsided.

"Why don't you just ask the school about it? I'm sure they'll break it off" he suggested and opened his book again.

How I wish I could do that...

"But I can't" I muttered.

"Hmp, suit yourself"

I owe that family and the only payment I could give is to marry their daughter who's face I don't even know.

How I wished this problem would subside like the storm..

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7 : 45 pm

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I bend down to get the drink that I bought from the vending machine before opening it where it released that refreshing sound of a hiss.

I drank it and sighed as that cold feeling washes my throat.

"Hey"

I look to my right where brazil is.

"Good evening Brazil" I greeted.

He smiled and greeted back "good evening, today was a tiring day huh?"

I nodded "yeah, but, everything was worth it" I replied "where's brasilià? Did you take him home now?"

"Yeah, and I also broke up with my girlfriend, I asked my secretary to take care of brasilià instead" he said.

"I see, that's good"

Brazil inserted a coin and pressed the drink he chose before crouching down to get it "also, I didn't get to hear what you did for brasilià until Norway told me earlier"

I tilt my head to the side "what I did?"

He opened his can of fanta and nodded "yeah, you chased him and brought him back"

I perked and look down "I didn't really bring him back, I almost got him killed too"

Brazil pats my head "I'm sure you didn't mean it, but you still did your best to find my son sooo... Thanks for it"

I blushed and smiled "you're welcome"

His words somehow comforted me.

"Anyhow, I'll see you at the spring party?" He turn to his heel.

"yes, see you then" I waved.

"Yeah, can't wait to see what you'll wear" he grinned and winked before pressing a button on the elevator.

Spring party, the first time I went there, I made a trouble and caused a commotion between a city girl.

That reminds me, how are those three girls that I met? I can't wait to see them again...

Just one more week.

And one more week for me to get another information...

"What are you doing there?" I jumped a little before swiftly turning towards the door where Tito is standing outside the dorm building.

I smiled and ran up to him "Tito!" I squealed and nuzzle my face on his chest.

"Why were you spaced out just now?" He asked as he wraps his hands around me.

"Just excited for the spring party" I lied.

I'm actually worried, and anxious. What am I going to tell brother?

"I see, I wanna be your first dance though, is that allowed?"

I nodded "yep, don't worry, I promise I won't dance with anybody first except you"

He smiled and pats my head "I'll keep that in mind– anyways, go back to your room now, it's dangerous for you to be alone in the all male academy"

I nodded and tap my forehead, he blinked a few times but quickly got the message "alright, goodnight pamangkin" he said and kissed it.

I blushed and smiled "goodnight Tito"

As I walked towards the elevator, I glanced back to him and he was waiting for me to get inside.

I waved again and stepped inside the small confined room before the door slowly closed.

My smile slowly became a frown.

I can't let Tito notice my worry.

And I can't let brother know I've been slacking off about my mission here. Well, I also cannot let him know I'm planning against him...

Just a few more years until brother finally executes his plan.

And I'll do anything to stop it...

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Location: unknown/ Time: 4 : 30 am/ Date: XX,XX,20XX

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—— is calling...

Answer ___ Decline

[ON CALL]

"We're here, as expected, the security is tigh-- ackk! Malaysia! What the heck?"

Inaudible *...*

"We found h--- "

Connecting... Connecting...

"You guys better prepare the —— we'll be back in no time"

End of call.

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< < < End of chapter 7 : Agape

> > > Coming Chapter 8 : Eccedentesiast

_____

Fact : Filip (gate keeper) was born on the time of the American colonization.

Fact 2 : Russia knows more than he lets on.

Fact 3 : philipia created her own language that only she can understand.

Fact 4 : Tethys sends philipia gifts weekly

Fact 5 : Greece hasn't fully accepted his fated pair

Fact 6 : Armageddon's body is incorruptible.

Fact 7 : China gave Germany the same candle he gave to Russia.

Fact 8 : Gondwanda and Laurasia has fascination towards yellow colored eyes.

Fact 7 : All languages were invented by the deceased continent leader: Rodinia .

Fact 8 : There are two traitors.

Fact 9 : Belarus is pregnant.

*Fact 10 : Hi, how are ya *wink**

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[I apologise again for the longggg ass delay and I can only provide two chapters π^π]

[I'm so sorry!!!!!!!]

[But I hope you enjoyed it and you can tell I wrote this while a little high on medicine ^^;]

[Anyways, I hope you liked it and see ya on the next one]

[Much love~~]

... .--. .... . .-. .

Chapter 8 : Eccedentesiast

[image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy ~]

_____

A dream...

A *dream where I was captured and tied with a thick rope.*

This work of bound is no joke, you can tell a professional binded me.

But who? Who would tie me up like this?

"So? Are you just going to stand there?"

I jolted and look to my right where a man who's face I can't see; stand. I know them, I'm sure I know them but I can't say their name.

And I feel an overwhelming amount of fear with them...

"Hey, philipia...."

I look ahead where someone was standing not far from us. They too, were tied, hands are tied behind them.

Who are you?

"No..." My voice spoke.

I want to ask who they are but I can't, my lips is moving on it's own.

And I get the feeling, I know what's going to happen.

"Please! Don't!" I yelled yet they smiled.

"It'll be okay" Slowly turning their heel, they walk.

And walk...

And walk...

Until the man beside me takes out his gun and...

"NO!"

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"N-no! Ah! Wahhh!"

I forgot that I fell asleep in the tree on one of it's thick bough while reading.

"Ow..." I grunted as I fell back first, but instead of the hard ground, I fell on to something soft - no. It's *someon*e, I fell on someone.

"BAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!"

I flinched when brazil bursted a laugh, he holds his stomach and softly fall back on the grass with tears forming on both corner of his eyes.

"Hey, you're crushing him"

I look to my left where Greece is, holding a book and Athena resting on his left shoulder.

"Him?" I blinked a few times and look down to where I'm sitting on to someone.

It was Norway, he was on the ground face buried in the grass "oh no! Norway!" I panicked and quickly got up before shaking him lightly.

"HAHAHAHAHAHA! you alwas know how to make an entrance

philipia! HAHAHAHAHA!!!!" Brazil laughed, kicking his feet in the air, firmly holding his stomach and already wheezing from laughter.

"U-uhmm Norway" I called again.

He slowly got up and turn to me with a smile "I didn't e-expect an angel to fall on me" he chuckled.

I sobbed as my worry grew, I must've broke a bone or something "I'm s-sorry! I didn't realize I fell asleep!"

Greece snorted and held back his laughter by covering his mouth and looking away.

"Gee, thanks guys, I can feel your worry and sympathy..." Norway spoke as he lay his head back down again "but uhh... Lemme sleep first" he added before blood was sliding down from his forehead.

"Norwayyyyy!!!" I called in worry and panicked a little.

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!"

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South wing [second floor clinic]

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I cut the last strip of bandage tape and place it in horizontal on Norway's forehead "I'm so sorry Norway" I said as I closed the medic box.

"Haha, it's fine"

Brazil laughed once more and laid down on the empty bed in the clinic "that really surprised us, when you suddenly fell" he said.

I shrink between my shoulders "I wanted to check the nest of birds and I thought the wind was nice on the tree so I fell asleep" I

explained.

Greece scoffed "seriously? Are you stupid? What if you hurt yourself? Or perhaps broke a bone?" He scolded.

I look down on my lap "I'm sorry"

"Heyyyy, Greece, can't you see she couldn't help it, and since when were you worried about someone?" Brazil spoke.

Greece flinched and stomped his feet "I'm just worried about the branch of the tree or the tree itself because she's probably heavy!" He defend with a flushed face.

Brazil raised a brow "uh huh, of course, hear that Norway?"

Norway turn towards them "rather than the tree, I'm the one who's injured here" He said.

Brazil laughed and Greece chuckled.

"Would you like Brazil to kiss the pain bye-bye?" Greece teased.

Brazil perks up and seems eager to do so "come here little boy, papa will kiss the pain bye-bye"

Norway scoff and rolled his eyes.

"I'm really sorry Norway, if you want, I'll do anything so that you'd forgive me" I pleaded.

They all look at me with a surprised expression before Greece stomps his feet "you're really an idiot" he said "just apologize! it wasn't that even a big deal"

Norway then gesture him to stop "nah, it's fine, but yes, I did forgive you now so you don't have to do anything" he grinned and pat me on the head.

"But still..."

"How about this, you owe me, and when I want something for you

to do in the future, you'd do it without hesitation" he said as he took the sampaguita from my left ear.

I nodded "okay..."

He smiled and pressed the flower to his nose and lips "great! I like this flower can I have it?"

I nodded "sure"

Suddenly, the bell rang signifying that lunch is over.

"Oops, let's go now" Brazil stood up and pushed himself from the bed, stretching his arms backwards.

Norway nodded and stood up as well, following behind Brazil.

I stood up as well and placed the medic box where it was from the cabinet.

"You really like to make your own problem huh?" Greece spoke.

I pressed my lips together firmly and look over him through the glass of the cabinet, his reflection and mine reflecting in a faded manner.

"I guess I do" I replied.

He shakes his head and turn to his heel before muttering once more "idiot"

Yeah, I am. I am an idiot, I know nothing and...

"Haaaa..." I sighed and press my forehead against the glass of the cabinet.

"Ah, this is it! The clinic, come on hurry up Nepal or we'll be late for class!"

I jolted when two people came in; it was Egypt and Nepal.

"oh? Mongrel, good timing, do you have those peasant things called tissues?" He asked with a grin.

I look over to Nepal who stand there completely unfazed and expressionless while blood is dripping from his nose.

"Ah, yes, I'll help you"

I took a tissue and damping it a little before twisting it that it's enough to insert in his nose that was bleeding.

"So this is how you treat a nose bleed, fascinating" Egypt said in awe as he stared at the damped tissue inside Nepal's nose.

Nepal looks over to me "thanks" he said.

I smiled and nodded "no problem, well then, I'll be going back to class" I said and waved at both of them before closing the door behind me.

Running inside the almost empty hallway, I hurriedly ran through the stairs and would swiftly turn to corners to arrive to the west wing building.

I gasped as catch my breath when I arrived in my classroom; luckily the teacher wasn't there yet.

"Safeee~" J pats me from behind and winked "I guess we were both in a hurry" he grins.

I chuckled and nod "yeah, but I had to run in full sprint" I replied.

As we got inside and took a seat, the teacher came in for the next subject.

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4 : 25 pm [Pangaea Mini Mart]

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"Wow, they actually sell condoms here" J commented as he stared

at the aisle of different brands of condoms "I bet Tethys has something to do with this"

South snorted and held his stomach "there's probably sodomy going on here" he said and they both snickered.

"It was me who added those" they flinched and we turn to the source of the voice where North stands.

"Hello north" I greeted.

North turn towards my direction and smiled "I'm gonna scold you if you're planning to buy one of those" he said as he approached us.

I tilt my head to the side "why would I?" I asked.

North then pats my head "keep it that way"

"Hey north, what do you mean you're the reason why there's condoms here?" South berated, raising his box of pocky.

"Exactly what I said, it's because there's been cases of male students here doing explicit things with the females, that one or two of them would complain since they got pregnant" he explained.

J snorted "or maybe it's because you're still a virgin..." South then laughed along and they both tried to hold in their laughter.

North raised a brow "I don't see it as a problem" he defend before turning to his heel "well then, if you're done go and make sure to pay" and with that, he left.

"Is he saying that I can't afford to buy these things?!" J exclaimed and I look over to the basket full of sweets.

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When we bought what we needed, we got out of the mini Mart and headed back to our dorm.

The mini Mart was built in the academy to avoid students going out, but some still does although it reduced.

"Hey philipia, are you excited for this week's spring party?" South asked as he walk beside me.

Excited? I don't even feel a little thrilled. I'm just anxious...

"Of course" I lied "what about you south?" I asked, avoiding anymore attention to what I feel about the upcoming spring party.

South grins from ear to ear "I'm excited as heck!" he nudges J with his elbow besides him "me and J are gonna wear some traditional attire!"

J then raised his hand with his mouth stuffed with store bought sweets "I hwore ah yhukaata bifhore"

[**I wore a yukata before]**

South laughed and faced me again "what about you? What are you gonna wear?"

I smiled and replied "Belarus told me that she'd make my dress"

He hums in response "Belarus? Russia's sis?"

I nodded in response "do you know her?"

"Yeah, I once saw her in the meeting of the world"

I can't even remember much what I did in that meeting, although I can recall hiding and trying my best to get out of sight.

And at that time, it was brother martial who did all the talking and job, he's the best when it comes to business and politics.

And also, he's the only one left who took care of me since it was only me and him now...

He took care of me and made sure I was protected and he asked nothing in return except this mission which is my first and possibly

my last.

Yet here I am, planning with brother Greg who left the country to fight for the others, to fight against him.

Argh, what am I supposed to do?

When we arrived back to our dorm, south went ahead to go back to his.

"See ya tomorrow philipia" J waved as he went inside his room which is just in front of mine.

I waved back and closed the door behind me before leaning my back on it and stare at the window that illuminated the orange sunset.

What kind of information should I give brother? Should I just lie and tell him there's been none?

Well, technically that isn't a lie since I haven't been able to get any new information at all. So basically there's none.

I sigh and slumped back on the wall, falling down on the floor and stare at the plastic bag with the things I bought earlier.

"Should I just lie about something?..."

But then it hit me, maybe like last time. When I danced with Joe, he gave me information, should I go with that?

Ahhh!! But it seems like I really am supporting brother..

But! It's for the greater good... Right?

"I'll just give myself the befit of the doubt.." I groan.

I'm sorry Joe, I'm gonna have to use you, of course that is after I dance with Tito, I did promise him after all.

Standing up, I went to my room and flop down on my bed.

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Another weird dream... Or not.

But a memory?

Ahhh, I remember this, I remember brother signing a diplomatic relationship with a country.

I remember talking to someone on the other side of the wall.

I remember them crying, sobbing and in pain as they tell me their problem that they normally can't tell to anyone.

I remember them wishing they could choose me.

And I remember them giving me their handkerchief, a sign that they'd want to meet me again someday.

It's been a long time since then, and I never met them at all, and I hid that handkerchief deep within my house...

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I flutter my eyes open and I'm greeted by my the usual ceiling.

The quiet dorm was now a noisy; pots and pans and the kitchen was now active.

Everyone is probably home now.

I turn to my night stand where my alarm clock and calendar is with the marker encircled on the date where the spring party begins.

"Two more days..."

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11 : 45 am

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"Mongrel!"

I flinched when Egypt called me.

I look back to see him approaching me with Nepal and Greece behind him.

"Mongrel?" Joe wondered as he raised a brow "The hell is he calling you like that?"

We were asked by professor Reich to bring the papers to his office by lunch but I didn't think Egypt would be here, isn't he supposed to be at the east wing building?

"Yes, mongrel" Egypt stated "I just wanted to thank this lovely maiden for helping my mongrel friend Nepal here"

Nepal nods at me still with the expressionless face.

"Why, what happened?" Joe asked, turning back at me.

"Nepal had a nose bleed so I helped him a little" I answered.

Egypt laughs dramatically "ha! It was like a work of magic, I heard female leaders does heal but! To think you'd heal him with a mere tissue!" He exclaimed and leaned close to Joe as if proving something "a *tissue*! Mongrel! How fascinating!"

"It feels like someone weird came out" Joe whispered besides me.

I giggled and lightly slap his arm, then I felt Greece glare at me.

His glare can stab me like a billion needles. What did I do?

"Anyways, I just saw you so we wanted to thank you" Egypt grins.

I giggled and nodded "of course, you're welcome"

"Oh by the way, do you have a first dance now?" Egypt bends a

little with his left arm behind him and his right arm extending to me "I don't mind dancing with y--"

"I already have one" I smiled.

"Whoah, I think I just heard his ego shatter" Joe laughed.

I turn to Egypt who is frozen in his position as if a shocking truth was dropped down on him "ah...I s-see" he said still with a smile plastered on his face.

Nepal simply nod again and dragged Egypt on the opposite direction through the back of his collar shirt.

"You guys are idiots, and don't go slapping someone's arm!" Greece points at me and stomps his feet "got it?!" He exclaimed and I nodded in response.

"The hell? What is wrong with people?" Joe muttered.

Greece then swiftly turn to his heel and followed Nepal and Egypt.

"Who's your first dance?" Joe asked as we continued our way.

"My uncle, Tito magdalo"

"Uhh, you mean professor jack?"

I nodded "yep!"

Oh wait! This is my chance! I can ask Joe to dance with me after I dance with Tito.

"U-uhmm Joe! Would you like to dance with me on the spring party?" I nervously asked.

Joe looks at me and chuckled before patting my head "sure, why not? I'll be waiting for ya, okay?"

"*I'll be waiting for you, mahal"*

I whince when I suddenly felt a throb in my head.

"You okay?" He worriedly asked.

"Y-yes, I just suddenly felt light headed"

What was that? I don't remember that... That was really painful – ah, but, I can feel filip easing up the pain.

Thank goodness.

"What was it again?"

"Huh?" Joe blinked a few times.

"O-oh, nothing"

Odd, what was it again?

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4 : 45 pm

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I yawned as I sat on the same bough of the tree where I fell from yesterday.

Since I finished attending my duties in the gardening club, I decided to make the tree as my new sanctuary. With this, no one can find me and no one will know I'm even here.

I guess climbing coconut tress as a kid was worth it.

"You're there again?" I look down to see Norway and Greece

"Good afternoon" I greeted.

"Is this gonna be a habit of yours? Climbing trees with a skirt? What if someone sees your underwear, or maybe what if you slipped?" Greece nagged.

I didn't know he worries for me, does that mean he accepted me as his friend now?

"Calm down *mom*, I'm sure philipia wouldn't do something she doesn't know, and this height wouldn't even kill someone" Norway defend.

Greece scoffed "are you kidding me? What if she did? What if she fell head first?

I giggled and dangle my feet "I'm okay Greece, though, thanks for worrying" I smiled.

Greece turns to me before looking away with a frown "hmp, I just don't want the grass to have your dirty blood"

"Yeah right" Norway chuckled before leaning on the tree just beneath where the bough I'm sitting on and sat down on the grass, Greece did the same but on his left side.

"You seriously haven't learned your lesson, she's up there and you're down here, she might fall on you again" Greece spoke.

"This is my spot and I like this spot– besides, any man would be thrilled that a girl fell on them" Norway winks at me and Greece rolled his eyes.

"It's you who's gonna catch her anyways"

I learned my lesson too.

Never fall asleep on the bough of the tree or else you'll fall to your death while half awake.

I look down on them again and noticed one person who's missing that's usually always with them.

"Why is Brazil not with you?" I asked.

"Ugh, he's still in the classroom talking about the spring party" Norway replied with eyes closed and both hands behind his head.

Greece turn to look at me "they're like a bunch of girls who's excited for a prom or something" he added.

"I see. Then, is Norway not interested in the party?" I asked.

"Are you though?" Norway looks up at me with one eye open.

I press my lips firmly and shrink between my shoulders; I guess it's fine to be honest with them.

"Honestly, I'm not really into the spring party" I admit.

Norway raised a brow "that's no problem, I heard from north that you had some sort of accident on your first spring party"

I gulped and nodded "yeah, it was somehow memorable" I chuckled.

"Kneeling down and getting a drink spilled is memorable?"

I perked up and turn to Greece "how did you know?"

Greece looks at me like I'm the only person who has no common sense "north told us, didn't Norway just said that?"

"Oh, right"

Norway then laughed "leave her be Greece, sheesh"

"Ugh, but anyways, Brazil is the most excited one out of us three" Greece said.

I see, I guess there are also some of them who isn't as thrilled for the upcoming party, but I still have different reasons why I am not.

"North also said that after the spring party, there's gonna be that summer camp" Greece spoke.

Norway then chuckled like Greece just said something funny "it's kinda sounds like that game" he said.

Me and Greece both tilt our heads "game?" I asked.

"You know, that summertime s..." His voice trails off as he saw what

me and Greece's expressions are "you know, nevermind"

"Righttt, but that summer camp was just implemented last month by Tethys, as always he just does what he wants"

I giggled and nod in agreement.

It's true, Tethys tends to be spoiled and just does what he wants although Mr. Pangaea doesn't mind and allows Tethys to do what he wants since he'll be the next continent leader.

"Summer camp, huh" Norway spoke and a gentle breeze past through us, making the leaves dance and rustle ever so softly.

This warmth and breeze reminds me of that conversation I had with that person on the other side of the wall.

"Well, have fun then" he continued.

"Have fun? You aren't gonna come?" I asked, leaning down a little to see him better.

"I couldn't come"

"Couldn't? Or wouldn't?" Greece stated.

"Uhhh, wouldn't? Gah! English am I right?" He joked.

"Whatever! But why? Why aren't you coming?" Greece asked with a displeased face.

Norway simply shrugged and stared at the sky "what's the point..."

"Urgh! You know, Brazil kept pestering me about the spring party over and over with us three! And I can't accept that you'll just pussy out!" Greece stood up, looking at Norway with a rather unfair tone.

Norway sighs "look, bud, this school is nothing but hypocrisy, so attending the spring party is just another way of saying *stay in Pangaea*"

"So what?"

"So what? Jesus Greece, wake up"

Greece bit his lower lip and and whistled before Athena came flying around the tree and landed on his forearm "come on Athena"

And with that, Greece left.

Norway sighed and scratch his nape "sheesh... Is it that important?"

Slowly climbing down, I pat his back "it's okay if you won't go, it's your decision" I said.

Norway turns to me and gave me a smile "thanks..."

"Hey guys! Oh, what happened?"

Greece walked pass Brazil who just arrived.

"Nothing! Norway wouldn't join the spring party!" Greece said as he stormed off.

Brazil perked up and turn to Norway as he approach him "you serious? Why? I thought us three would go together?"

Norway scratch his nape "I can't bro"

"Cause of what? Is it because of your upcoming wedding?"

Wedding? Norway is getting married?

Norway didn't answer as it seems Brazil hit the nail, he scoffed and crossed his arms "so you still haven't solved that issue?"

Norway let his head fall back and leaned back on the tree "like I said, so what? It's my business and besides, what's so fun in that party?"

Brazil groaned "cause we promised didn't we? And you know how much of a big deal a promise is to Greece, that's why he hesitated to even accept a promise"

Norway stood up and dusted his pants "I'll see what I can do" he said and walks the same direction where Greece stormed off too.

It feels like he wanted to say more and argue about it but I guess he gave up immediately.

His voice is somehow familiar now, why didn't I feel that before?

Brazil then sighs "seriously..."

I cleared my throat and he flinched from it "o-oh, philipia! I didn't even know you were there" he smiled nervously.

"It's okay, I was here the whole time"

"Ahh, so you knew what happened?" I nodded and hopped down, landing perfectly "I can help you"

Brazil blinks a few times "oh, so you're thinking what I'm thinking?"

I grinned and nodded "I want to help"

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In two days, we all planned to help Norway cancel the political engagement his father had set.

With the help of America, North, China and Russia, we were able to process the papers faster and easier.

Greece and Brazil then went to his country and talked to his father while me and Spain distracted Norway to avoid him getting suspicious since Brazil and Greece were nowhere to be found.

And when Brazil and Greece came back, they didn't really get a definitive answer from his father but they said there's a 50% chance he'll change his mind which was a relief.

Of course, that was what we thought.

But even if multiple, big and strong countries tried to annul an engagement, the decision was still bleak since it was still his father to decide.

I guess a pride of a country leader is hard to break when it's been there for so long.

And on the day before the spring party.

Norway charged at us and scolded us for doing something stupid.

Greece, Brazil and him fought and that because of our nosy nose, his father wanted to take him back.

And thus, Norway had more reason not to attend.

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5 : 12 pm [spring party]

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"Starshine, you look down, is something wrong?"

I sighed as I stare at my full body mirror "it's just, we wanted to help Norway but instead, we made it worse"

Even North and China thought it was preposterous.

It's not everyday you get one of the big countries to help annul an engagement, what's more, it was 4 of them.

"Ahhh, so I've heard" Belarus said as she fixes my make up "but I'm sure, he can overcome his own problem with his own hands"

She's right...

Norway isn't weak, but I guess he still doesn't have the confidence.

No matter what the reason why they can't annul it, I guess we really have no right to mess with his business...

"Now come! Try the dress I made for you!" She beams as she hands me the dress.

It was a turtle neck, backless, fitted one dress with an extra fabric dragging across the floor that is in a frill design.

"I was right! The color sky blue fits you so well! It contrast to your red skin " She squeals as she went ahead to get another item from her bag.

I look over to my reflection again and sigh.

Next week, Norway will have to leave.

Stupid me, if only I didn't ask to help then maybe, Norway could've had changed his mind and join the spring party.

"Ah ha! Here you go!" Belarus beams as she handed me an earring with a sampaguita flower on it and two small bells were hanging.

"Ahhhh~ you look so beautiful!"

I smiled and stood up "thank you so much, Belarus"

She shakes her head and stares at me more "when I give birth, I want my daughter to be as beautiful as you!!! Oh! That is, *if* it's a girl"

We both giggle before Belarus started to clean and I helped her.

As I was closing her bag, I recalled the box that mark sent me yesterday.

That's right, he sent me all my old things when they were cleaning, including the ones he found and thought it would be nice if I could see them before I ask him to throw it away.

Typical mark...

I do remember all the stuffs inside, yet one item caught my eye.

"What a pretty handkerchief" Belarus said behind me since I was crouched down on the floor "would you like to wear it?" She offered.

This handkerchief was the one given to me by an old friend that I met one time.

But I guess wearing it wouldn't be bad, it'll be like commemorating it.

I nod and hand it to her "please"

Belarus giggled and gestures me to stand up.

She then started to wrap it around the golden belt that hangs a bit from the hip. Since it was red, it fitted perfectly on the dress, as if it was made for it.

[A/N: Sorry I couldn't show it to you guys, but I will draw them all in their second (some are their first) year, spring party attire]

When I was done.

Belarus and I head out to the lounge where everyone was already gathered up.

"Whoahhh!!!!!!! Philipia is so pretty!!!!" Malaysia squeals as he takes out his phone and we took a selfie.

"Me next!" Indonesia raised his hand.

Brunei and Israel stood by the dining area while staring at us. I guess they wanted to take a selfie too.

"Goddess! It is my humble request that I kiss the back of your holy hand!" Germany declared and I nodded.

"Uhmm...sure" I said and hands him my hand as he takes it gently and kneeled one knee before kissing the back of it.

"How romantic~" Belarus sweetly said as she stares at Germany "was he always like this?" She asked and they all nodded.

I giggled and take Germany's hand as well and kissed the back of it too.

"Ah..." he suddenly fainted while blood was trickling down his nose.

"Germany?! Are y-you okay?" I exclaimed.

"Hahahah!" Malaysia laughed "you're so adorable!" He said and hugged me.

"Ah! Ah! No! you'll ruin the make up!" Belarus scolded as she slaps malaysia's hand away.

"Owwww~!"

As we we all took a group photo, we all went down the building and saw many students all in formal attire (some are in their traditional clothes) made their way to the central gym where it is connected to both academy.

"Sunshine!"

I turn around to see Russia, Joe, and Spain all dressed up for the day "hello Russia, you look handsome today"

Russia chuckled "and here I thought I saw a goddess"

"Cause she is you lowly beast!" Germany berated.

"Yeah whatever, but anyways, shall we?" Russia offered his arm.

I was about to accept but I saw Tito who was also on his way "oh! Sorry, but, I think I might go with my uncle" I pointed my Tito and they all nodded.

"See ya later tonight philipia" Joe waved and it reminded me that I asked him to dance with me before.

"Oh, yes! See you later everyone" I waved and hurriedly went to

Tito.

"Whoah there, don't you look dazzling and breathtaking tonight?"

I grinned "and don't you look charming and captivating as well tonight" I responded.

Tito laughed and offered me his arm which I immediately accepted.

Before entering the gym, a guard will stamp on the back of your right hand so that when the party is over, they'll know which academy you are.

But if you ask me, there's no need for the stamp since, they'll know immediately if you're from the male academy or not.

But I guess something must've happened before that the security tightened.

As we enter the gym, like the first time I attended the spring party. It was dim, disco lights were playing, the booming music shaking the place and the long aisle of food from different countries were all present.

"Wanna grab something to eat first? I'm hungry" Tito said who had to speak near my ear since the music was so loud.

I nodded and we both head our way towards the aisle of food.

I'm not going to be surprised if J is dancing with a plate of sushi again.

"It's lechon!" He exclaimed and my head instantly turn towards it's direction.

"Lezgo" he takes a knife and started cutting the skin part only and gave me some as well.

It's almost like home whenever I attend a birthday party of a friend.

"Maple syrup!!!"

Whoah, even from this booming noise, I can still hear Canada.

"Hello Canada, enjoying the party?" I asked.

Canada was with France and Ukraine and they were all wearing formal attire.

They all look so handsome.

"Maple syrupp, you're so pretty todayy!!" Canada beams while rubbing his face on my chest.

"Hey! Canada! You're going to make philipia spill her food!" France pulled Canada from me and locked him around the neck with his arm.

"Ehhhh!!!! But she smell so good!"

"Philis! Will you dance with me tonight?" Ukraine jumped in with eyes sparkling in anticipation.

"Sorry, but I'm going to be her first dance" Tito said behind me while munching a shrimp.

Ukraine then glared at Tito "I don't care, since you're still eating! I will go and dance with philis!"

Tito then glared back "back off, I'm your professor, you should follow what I say"

The two then starts bickering and Canada was struggling from France who was scolding him.

I took this chance to slip away from the group and decided to get more food.

They sure are lively, I guess this was the way for the school to say that everything we did in the spring exam was worth it.

"Eating immediately?"

I turn to my right where Sweden, Poland and Mexico are.

"Hello" I smiled.

"Ladybug, you're a true lady of the night tonight" Sweden compliments.

I blushed and smiled "thank you Sweden, but you guys look more attractive than before, your attires suits you" I said.

"Amor, stunning as always, but you didn't need to have those colors on your face" Mexico then kissed my left cheek and I did to him as well.

"Wow, so sly" Poland grins "Who is your first dance by the way?"

"My uncle"

"Ahhh, señor jack, then, if it's not too much would you dance with me afterwards?"

Everyone sure likes to dance today.

"Sure!"

The music then suddenly changes into a disco, one that you would usually hear in a club, but that music alone made everyone go wild and started dancing on the dance floor.

"Oh! Let's join! We'll dance with you later too ladybug!" Sweden said and pulled mexico into the dance floor as well.

Even with this huge place and a sea of people, everyone was still able to find me and ask for a dance.

"There's a table!" Tito said with mouth stuffed with shrimp.

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When me and Tito finished the food, after resting for a bit, we decided to dance in the slow music.

"What a party" Tito commented.

I wrap my hand around his neck while Tito wrap his hands around my waist.

"Never been to a party Tito?" I asked.

"I did once, but I could barely remember it" he replied "although this reminds me of the day I danced with your mother"

"You danced with mama?"

He hummed in response "yeah, on her wedding day, and she was the most beautiful bride I've ever seen. Covered in white, even the heavens was moved by her beauty"

A smile creeped on my lips, even if she wasn't wearing anything fancy, mama was still the most kindest and most beautiful woman I've ever seen.

"And now that she gave birth to you and you who grew up to be like her, reminds me of that very special day" he continued before spinning around and kneeled on one knee as the music ends, he kissed the back of my hand as smiled at me.

I giggled and bowed down.

"Now then, I heard many guys have been trying to pursue you, so why not give them a chance?"

When Tito released me, everyone suddenly started to gather up.

The next person I danced with was with North, then I was passed to China, Spain, south, J, Russia, then Mexico.

My feet, this is why I'm not a fond of heels.

After that second slow music, I wasn't given a chance to even react when Canada snatched me and danced with me as well, although the dance with Canada was more dramatic and it really felt like he was trying to hog the dance floor and that everyone started to give space to us that they were all staing at us.

It's so embarrassing.

After that, France grabbed me from Canada and dance with me as well, then I was passed (again) to NZ, then to Australia, Scotland, Ireland, and Arabia.

Arabia and I accidentally danced with each other since we bumped by accident and I almost tripped, luckily he was there to catch me, and in order no to cut the flow of the music, we had no choice but to continue it.

But with just 6 moves of the dance, Vietnam grabbed my hand and danced with me as well.

Ahhh, I wanna rest, I can't feel my feet anymore, maybe I should've worn a tennis shoes instead since it won't be seen with this long gown.

Without even realizing, I was already dancing with Israel "stunning" he whispered before he passed me to Brunei.

Me and Brunei dance only for a second before he passed me to Germany, who was tense and stiff.

He would accidentally step on my feet and he would furiously apologized the whole time while dancing.

Even if my feet was throbbing in pain, I didn't mind since it was rather enjoyable, but he passed me to Malaysia and Indonesia.

Us three held hands together while spinning around like a bunch of kids. It was fun and we were laughing the whole time.

Then, they gently stopped and passed me to Poland and Sweden who was both in synch at dancing with just me.

Then they bowed down and Iran asked for a dance next.

I wanted to rest so bad but I can't refuse since I was pressured a little bit with many people watching.

Basically, we're dancing in the middle of the crowd and they were simply watching us – watching me dancing and being passed to one person to another.

But since Iran is deaf, I mostly lead the way for him and surprisingly, he was able to catch up.

After that, he passed me to cosmos, who (of course) was still wearing his helmet.

But his dance was somehow much more smooth and light, as if there was no gravity pushing us down, it was so smooth that my body was moving on it's own.

He spins me around and I landed onto someone's chest.

Unexpectedly, it as Singapore. It made me happy that he attended the party even with his condition, and of course even if he has improved now, he still wore his gloves every now and then.

And the whole time, he was flushed red. It's probably because of the heat of the place.

After singapore, I was passed to Finland and Estonia. Our dance was a bit similar to the dance me, Malaysia and Indonesia did.

We did nothing but spin around but it was a bit more gentle since Estonia was blind, but it seemed to have satisfied him so they passed me to joe.

"Finally! Haha!" He beams as we danced.

"Sorry if I took so long" I apologized.

Joe shakes his head "it's fine, I can tell you're tired, you've been dancing nonstop, especially your dance with Malaysia and Indonesia"

I chuckled "I enjoyed it though"

Joe then smiled and in our dance, our eye contact was somehow deep and there was something in it that I can't pinpoint.

I feel somehow restless, yet at the same time, missing something and it makes me sad.

"Lean on my chest if the eye contact makes you feel awkward"

I nodded and did what he said. I leaned on his chest and I could hear his heartbeat that's faster than average.

Joe is such a nice person...

And to think I was about to use him,
I don't deserve a friend like him...

"You know, it made me happy when besides professor jack, I'm the second and last person you personally asked for a dance" he whispered and I look up at him.

His blue eyes glimmering.

A situation that makes me feel nostalgic.

"Let's dance again on the next spring party, but the next one, I'll only dance with you all night and not let anyone else take you" he winked before kissing my forehead.

I soften my eyes and felt tears threatening to spill.

I really can't let them die... I really can't let brother kill them...

"Oops, times up, I guess I still have to share what's not mine yet" he said before passing me to Brazil.

As his hand was slipping from mine, I suddenly felt fear of losing.

This feeling. I felt this pain of losing something before... Was it from a memory or a dream?

"Gotcha!" Brazil beams as he caught my hand and continued the flow of the dance.

And in our dance, Brazil looked like he wanted to say something but couldn't "Haaaa, I really can't say it..." He said.

He made eye contact on someone and passed me to someone who was Greece. The dance wasn't even a minute long, is there a

problem?

"Hey" Greece called and I look up to him "it's about Norway..."

Three steps to the left.

"He said he's going home next week right?"

One step back.

"Well, we checked his room earlier..."

Three steps right.

"And it was empty... His wardrobe, the walls full of pictures, his bed– empty. He left today..."

A waltz.

"And we couldn't find him anywhere anymore..."

And as the music slowly fades, Greece and I separate a little and I twirl away gracefully as those words he said slowly sank in.

A tear fell and I slowly bowed down all the way to the floor while he bowed down with his right hand on his chest.

"N-no..." I muttered.

If it weren't for the people applauding and cheering after the dance, I would've been stuck in that position.

Immediately standing up, I pulled my skirt and ran out the place as everyone started gathering up at the dance floor and danced on their own now.

"Philipia!" Greece called but I pushed away the sea of people and out of the gym.

I can hear them calling me from behind but I took my heels off and carried them instead as I ran full sprint towards the school building.

Nobody can leave Pangaea immediately without going through a

few things.

But the school building was pitch black, there was no one in the school building anymore.

Not in a single light was on in all four main buildings.

"Norway!" I called as I stood in the main garden.

I've never been here at night, and I never even realized how empty, quiet and cold the main garden is at night.

"Philipia!" Greece called again with Brazil, Finland, and Egypt behind him.

Think philipia, he can't just leave immediately, even if the music at the gym was loud, we would've heard a helicopter, and feel the strong gust of wind it makes.

The gym where the spring party is held is just besides the transportation area for the male and female leaders.

Could it be... He's still there?

"There's nothing we can do about it anymore" Brazil said as he comforts me with a hug.

No. He's still here,

It was all my fault... It as my fault that his father forced him back.

If only Tethys was here, then maybe he could've done something...

But I can't always depend on him. I have to learn how to stand and protect my friends.

"No! He's still here!!" I yelled and pushed Brazil off and ran away again, leaving the heels behind now.

The spring cold was still enough to make me shiver and freeze, considering with the dress I'm wearing I might freeze faster if I stop.

But with every step and every huff of my breath, a smoke would

appear that would slightly cloud my vision.

I can still hear my friends chasing me behind, but I can't lose to them, running is one of my specialty.

"I knew it!" I a said as I saw the wing of a helicopter sticking out of the wall and I'm sure on the other side is Norway.

As I pushed the gate open, I saw Norway talking to a pangean captain while carrying multiple bags and suitcase.

I stop to catch my breath but as I walked a little closer, and took a deep breath before calling him with all my might "NORWAY!"

My voice echoed and he immediately turn to my direction.

He flinched and looked a bit surprised to see me, but he immediately turn away and continued walking to the helicopter.

"Please! Don't go!" I yelled yet the music from the spring party just besides this place, is still booming.

Norway didn't seem to stop or hesitate as he held the handle of the helicopter– about to hop in.

I bite my lower lip and carried my gown again and ran towards him but I accidentally stepped on to something sharp and it pricked my foot that I fell hard on the ground.

"Ah!"

"What the-! Philipia!" Norway called worriedly as he hurriedly went to my aid.

He kneeled down but I grabbed his feet and look up to him "got you" I grinned.

Norway was taken aback but sighed "you're reckless, look at you... Here, let me see" he made me sit and gently took my left feet.

"There's a thumbtacks " he said and pulled it out.

"Luckily, female leaders body heal" he said and I feel the small throbbing pain slowly subside.

Norway helped me up and dusted my dress "you look so beautiful, I thought for a second an actual angel came to get me" he said as he takes out a handkerchief and rubs my cheek.

His handkerchief is somehow familiar.

"Sorry I couldn't tell you, or I couldn't tell any of you..." He said as he looks at me in my eyes "but I guess, because of it you had to run out of the party..."

I shake my head and take his hand "please stay... Please don't go" I pleaded, pressing his hand on my forehead and burying my face on his palm "I'm sorry for what we did, if only I didn't interfere then maybe you didn't have to--"

My words were cut off when a pair of hands embraced me tightly.

The only source of light was the disco light peeking every now and then from the gym and the moon light that's brighter than anything...

"It wasn't your fault, it not any of your faults... Thanks to it, you guys gave me a push to annul it... But I still can't be sure..." He said as his hug tightened around me.

I bite my lower lip and bury my face on his shoulder as my vision blurry from the tears.

"Don't go, Norway...." I said again.

Norway then separates himself from me and pressed his forehead against mine "I promise, I'll fix it on my own now, I want to stand on my own from now on, but I'm not saying I won't see you guys anymore... Like I said, you idiotic, stupid knuckleheads gave me the push to annul it..."

I sobbed and shrink between my shoulders.

"Norway..." Brazil called behind me who finally caught up.

Norway chuckled and faced them, but I still held his hand and didn't budge.

"Take care of the things on my stead, and to philipia here" he said an pats my head with his free hand.

Brazil sighed "ugh, don't say it like this is the last time, we can still visit your country whenever we want"

Norway chuckled.

Egypt then scoffed "you better come back mongrel"

"Yeah, I'll make sure to bring back jewelries for ya" he replied and Egypt laughed.

"I suppose jewelries doesn't sound bad"

"Don't even bother coming back" Greece said, but I know he didn't mean it.

"Then I'll make sure to come back to piss you off" Greece responded with an annoyed scoff.

"And you, Finland"

"Don't worry, we'll take care of sunflower" Finland immediately answered.

Norway laughed "I know that, you're a sucker for your sunflower anyways"

"Tch, so you know, then you don't have to worry"

"Glad I don't have to listen to you talk about your Sunflower anymore and create remarks against it"

Finland stomps his feet "just go and don't come back, and I'm sure Estonia will say the same thing"

"Where is he?" Brazil asked.

"He's with Iran and cosmos" Finland replied.

They laughed and exchanged goodbyes even more, but as it fades. Norway turns to me.

I was still clutching onto his hand that I refused to let go.

"Philipia...hey" he called but I shake my head.

"Don't go... Greece and brazil will be lonely, school won't be complete without Norway"

He laughed and pressed his forehead to mine again "just admit you'll miss me"

"I do! I'll miss you! So please!" I pleaded that my tears scattered and dropped one by one "–please don't leave..."

Norway sighed to my selfish request.

But as we stayed there, the music from the gym changed again and it turned into a slow music.

"Remember what I told you? You owe me after falling on top of me from the tree?"

I flinched and nodded hesitantly "yes..."

"Well, I have a favor to ask of you now"

I bite my lower lip and shut my eyes close.

"You have to let go of my hand, but I promise I'll come back..." he said.

I whimpered and still shake my head.

He chuckled and cup my left cheek with his free hand "and I want to dance with you too..." he added.

I faced Norway who has this sad, bitter smile.

The tears continued to flow but I nodded.

"You look too beautiful not to ask for a dance..." He said as he took

my hand and pressed my body with his when his other hand rest on my hips.

We danced through the music at the gym and I can hear the captain already preparing to start the helicopter.

And when he did, the rotor started spinning slowly.

"Don't go" I pleaded again yet the strong wind brought by the helicopter grew stronger and stronger every second pass by.

Norway stopped and kept my hand close to my chest with his handkerchief curled in my palm beefore taking mine that's wrapped on my belt "to remember... And a symbol that I'll definitely come back for you..."

I sobbed and didn't have a choice but to just give up and let him be...

"Bye... See you someday" and with that, Norway pressed his lips against mine for a short amount of seconds before running towards the helicopter that's already hovering above ground.

He hopped on the landing gear and hopped in inside, giving me one last glance before closing the helicopter door.

Watching him go, I was standing there clutching onto the handkerchief and waved him goodbye "take care..."

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After fastening my seat and leaning back on the chair.

I brush my fingertips on my lips as her warm ones still linger on it.

She was the first girl to ever kiss me and the second one too... And I

want to keep it that way...

And as much as possible, I wan it to be the last.

I look down to my lap where the handkerchief wrapped nicely on her belt was resting.

Funny, her handkerchief was somehow similar to mine.

And this handkerchief, it's familiar.

I unravel it and my eyes widen when I saw the initial *N* on the bottom left corner.

There's no doubt this is mine...

Was mine.

Could it be, that philipia was the person who I spoke to back in 1948? The person on the other side of the wall?

"Haha...haha..." I couldn't held it in.

To think she was this close to me.

To think that the person who I wished to choose before was here besides me all along...

"Maybe, we really are soulmates..."

Wait for me philipia.

Wait for me Pangaea.

I'll definitely come back, I'll come back as someone new, as someone who's better than the old Norway...

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It's been a few weeks after the spring party and Norway's leave from pangaea.

Ever since then, everyday has been much livelier, especially Estonia and Finland.

And the fact that there's been many female students sneaking in to see the male leaders that danced with me, especially towards Israel, Sweden, Australia and south.

They've been getting more and more love letters and gifts from the girls in the other academy.

Of course I accepted some too, although I do remember the three girls I met before and they also came to see me from time to time.

They said they've been looking for my twin.

And of course, I don't have one, but I do have twin brothers so I thought they meant red.

Red did mention he met them so it was him who they're chasing after.

I didn't know red was popular among the girls.

Could I be handsome?

Better not tell them and break their innocent hearts.

"Hey! Again with the tree climbing"

I flinched and look down where Greece is with Athena, she flew from his arm and landed on mine.

"Good afternoon, Greece" I greeted.

"Come down now! We still have a lot to do!"

That's right, Greece joined the gardening club and was assigned on the place to where I was.

I nodded and slowly climbed down, of course with him prepared to catch me if I fell.

"You!" He flicked my forehead "did you wear shorts!?"

"Y-yes" I replied while rubbing my forehead.

"Look at you, leaves are all over your uniform" he said and dusted the fallen leaves on me.

"And your shoes are untied! Goodness me!" Greece then kneeled and he placed my feet on his leg before tying it up for me.

He's been overprotective like a mother– almost like Brunei too ever since that day.

"Here, drink water, you're thirsty aren't you?"

Well, not really but it's best to accept it to avoid making Greece mad.

Cause the last time I made him mad after falling asleep at the rooftop, I went through an hour of scolding.

"T-thank you, Greece" I nervously take the water bottle and drank from it.

He then takes out his handkerchief and started wiping my face "you didn't have to do this Greece" I said.

"Shut up, I'm already doing you a favor so just shut up and accept it" he demanded "now open your mouth" he ordered and I followed.

"Here" he said and dropped a candy in.

I beamed and smiled "thank you, it's my favorite"

"I just happen to buy a mango candy, what's so good about it anyways?" he muttered before taking my hand and whistling Athena over "now come on already" he added as we started walking back to the gardening room to get our tools.

"Okay.."

"And don't sleep on the tree again! You'll fall and get yourself hurt! Geez!"

"Philisss!!!"

Suddenly, Ukraine tackled me from behind "you on your way to the gardening room?"

"Yeah, so bug off okra" Greece snarled and pulled me away from him and started walking faster.

"O-kra?! It's Ukraine! And I'm going to the same room too you know!"

I giggled as I grabbed Ukraine's hand and us three went to the room.

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Date: ??? – Location: ??? – Time: 12 : 00 am

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{ How are you Norway? I hope you're doing good. You don't need to worry about me, I'm doing good and everyone has been taking good care of me (especially Greece and Finland) but I don't mind, it's just overwhelming sometimes }

"Sir, I have the report of the —— project"

{ I guess I have to find a new place to hide. Even if the school is huge and spacious, it's still hard to find a place or find a sanctuary }

"So what happened? Did everything went well?"

{ We miss you by the way. Anyways, the summer camp will be tomorrow, we'll be going to an island that is man made by Pangaea }

"It's ——— "

{ It's an island called vaalbara }

"What?! So what happened?!"

{ That's all, I'll send you a text again, please do reply to it. This is my 28th text now. But I understand if you're busy. }

"They did what?..."

{ Sincerely yours... }

"Dead?..."

{ Philipia }

———————

< < < End of Chapter 8 : Eccedentesiast

> > > Coming Chapter 9 : Pulchritudinous

———————

Fact : Sometimes dreams can be predictions.

Fact 2 : philipia's dress was made of real stones such as Ruby, sapphire, gold and diamonds that was provided by Tethys.

Fact 3 : Both USSR and Third Reich had met and known their fated pair.

Fact 4 : There are 5 man made island that Pangaea made.

Fact 5 : There was a woman who was close to Armageddon and her mother.

Fact 6 : Little pup has a girlfriend, a female dog that martial bought.

Fact 7 : Italy and Denmark is coming

*Fact 8 : Germany had a unholy dream (**coming soon**)*

Fact 9 : Tokyo is due soon

*Fact 10 : Love thy self ^\\^*

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[Heeyaaaa !!!!! I hope you enjoyed chapter 8 ^^ I really loved how I made Norway here, the part of them dancing really made me squeal! >\\<]

[And I'm sorry if I couldn't publish it yesterday (I was supposed to publish it yesterday) but due to some stuff because my laptop was... Well... My children in a GC knows sooo *sighs*]

[It's too heartbreaking for me]

[Anyways, next week will be chapter 9 and two chapters for Mandela effect]

[Stay in touch ><]

[Much love ~~]

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Chapter 9 : Pulchritudinous

[image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy ~]

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Location: unknown - Time: 08:28 am

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One new message.

Message [1];

*Take the ----- ! Don't -----..... To the party!..... before it's ----.... Don't....------ the files!.....---- please get my-----....! ili...*pi--------*... It's a---..... Don't ---- the bait! .....--- don't take it! Before it's .....---- before it's!!!!.....---- RUN AWAY!....*

End of voice message.

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What does a pharaoh do, exactly?

Wage war?

Yes.

Make laws?

Yes.

Collect taxes?

Yes.

Give jobs?

Yes.

Collect jewelries and stones?

Absolutely.

Rulers of the two lands?

Definitely.

And lastly, are they the embodiment of the gods?

Ha! Ha! Ha! Mongrels! Because **I am**! That's why I'm even bothering to explain such simple things!

But of course, mongrels like everyone really has a slow minds. HA! HA! HA!

Ahhh, speaking of mongrel...

"Nepal! My mongrel friend!" I called my stone faced buddy Nepal who rarely shows any expressions- in fact, I haven't seen him make any expression at all.

He simply nod in reply (as always)

I laughed and gesture him to walk with me back to our room.

"Don't you think this school is too spacious?"

He shrugged.

"The interior reminds me of those Victorian designs with a hint of modern"

He shrugged.

"When was this school first opened again?"

"299 million years ago" he replied, monotonously.

Awed- surely, I am. To think everything originated from this one continent.

Languages, laws, arts, architecture, monarchy, kingdoms, empires... Etc.

And slowly, it spread and stayed in one area of their own.

Languages started to spread to different places too and they made it as their own.

Fascinating, it's truly fascinating!

When we arrived to our room, as always; it's messy and loud. It just makes me laugh how idiotic and monkey like behavior my lower classmates are.

Peasants, am I right?

But I didn't say I can't not control them.

As a pharaoh, a king, a ruler- a leader! Such a thing is easy as building a pyramid.

"Silence! Mongrels!" I yelled, they all stop and turn their heads to me except Singapore, Germany, Finland and Estonia.

Of course they wouldn't, they're leaders (like me) but I'm still the highest of them.

"If you don't start silencing yourselves! I shall sew your lips myself! With a defectant needle!"

Nepal then leans close to my right ear from behind me "it's *disinfected needle"* he corrected me.

Such peasant and lowly things that I cannot understand, I'm glad Nepal is here.

"Ahhh, I meant *disinfected* needle!" I stated.

They all bowed and nodded as they followed what I said. All of them started to go back to their seats and sat there to do their own thing instead and kept quiet.

I smirked and felt proud of myself.

Good job as always Egypt! HA! HA! HA!

I proceed to walk to my seat and sit there with legs crossed and arms crossed on my chest - just like home.

This is the life of someone born of nobility, royalty and authority.

"Will you stop that? It's creepy, smiling all by yourself while laughing" Finland- who sat besides me- leaned close and said.

I raised a brow as I faced him "I'm simply praising myself" I replied with a charming smile.

He gave me a look of being creeped out and mentally disgusted.

"Is there a problem?" I asked.

Finland shakes his head and replied "nothing" before going back to what he was doing.

I can never understand other people, in my country, praising yourself is a sign of self love.

I should teach Finland how, he really needs it.

"Alright class, settle down!"

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11 : 35 am [lunch / Mon]

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As I was walking with Nepal in the hallway on our way to the cafeteria where a bunch of lowly peasants crowd themselves in.

There were two cities walking infront of us.

"Did you watch that new video Pxxxpie posted?" One of them said and the other replied "hell yeah, that shit was funny as fuck"

Hell yeah?

Funny as fuck?

What weird phrases.

I was about to ignore their peasant like conversation until one of them was eating a burger and threw the wrapper like a woman on the floor... **Besides the trashbin!**

What in the world? How dare them, the mother nature provides us such a clean environment and yet they make garbage?

Disgraceful!

I huff and stomped my way to him, picking up the wrapper he threw; I tap on his right shoulder "you" I said.

They both flinched "y-yeah?"

They didn't even greet two leaders before them? Truly, disgraceful! Disrespectful!

"Your trash" I said with malicious aura around me.

I grabbed his cheeks and press it together before slowly shoving the wrapper in his dirty and foul mouth "you forgot to throw it...

Properly"

I can tell that both of them are shivering in fear beneath us "if I ever see you again, I'll make sure I'll mummified you alive"

They both nodded as they got the message. I released him and he fell on his knees before I tap my feet "now scram!"

"Y-yes!" They both said and ran away like a bunch of goats.

I breath out and dusted my hands together "can you believe this Nepal?" I said.

He shrugged.

"Such disgraceful creatures"

He shrugged.

"I knew you'd understand; peasants like them shouldn't even be a city, they should be those lower creatures called slaves!"

Unbelievable, I want to file a complaint!

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Student council office

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"So, you saw a student throw a trash but it didn't end up in the trash and it end up on the floor... And you shoved the trash in their trash like... Mouth? Is what you said?" North Korea stated as he repeated what I said.

"Exactly! It was disgraceful!" I said, slamming my fist (lightly) on the table.

North Korea looks at me with one brow raised "but it was quickly

resolved when you shoved that trash in his... Trash like mouth"

I nodded "I did what I could do! Now I want those two expelled!"

He sighs and shake his head "we don't do that, only Tethys and the principal can expell a student" he said.

I look at him bewildered "excuse me? Only Tethys and the principal? Then what is your purpose here?"

"I'm simply the vice president here, so I don't have the full authority"

I slumped back to my seat "are you hearing this right Nepal? They won't expell the students!"

He shrugged.

"Exactly! Why not?!"

"Didn't you just hear what I said?" North berate "I'm the vice!" He stated.

I slammed my hand on the table and stood up "then where is the president?! I'd like to speak to him!"

China then turns his chair to us and removed his glasses "he's busy so don't bother him" he replied.

I cross my arms in my chest "disrespectful, you're speaking to a pharaoh" I sternly said.

China scoffed as if what I said was a joke.

"What a joke" he said.

I flinched bu how shocking it was for him to speak such manner to me "how dare you" I snarled.

"Look, if you want to talk to Tethys, just wait for him to return" he reasoned.

"But it will take a long time"

"Then you got no choice, we'll just add more janitor if it continues"

These two, why are they being so unreasonable? Expelling a student is as easy as firing someone from a job.

I do it all the time when someone does something poorly.

And to think Pangaea academy is considered the most elite and high ranking school in the world.

In.the.world!

But for students to simply throw a trash is a bother for them? Then this school is the joke.

"I heard philipia is close to Tethys" Nepal spoke.

China and north both halts from doing what they were doing.

"Oh really?"

He shrugged.

"Then I must speak to her!"

China broke his pen, north immediately turn to us "don't you dare!" He said as he stood up.

"Oh? And why not?"

"Because Tethys won't return even if you ask for her" China replied almost instantly.

"Rumors said he dotes on her" Nepal spoke again and it was enough to convince me!

"Alright! Off to find the mongrel philipia!"

I hear North korea and China trying to get out of their seat, trying to convince me not to.

But it is too late! Nepal and I ran away through the hallway, through stairs and all the way to main garden where she is usually

seen.

I huff and catch for my breath.

"Now, where is she?" I asked before Nepal points towards the direction of the tree.

"Ahhh, over there, I see" I grinned; walking my way towards it. I look up to the gigantic tree and noticed a feet sticking out.

Is she really sleeping on the bough of the tree?

"Step back Nepal, this is a gentleman's moment" I gesture to which he followed and stepped back.

I cleared my throat and took a deep breath "oh my dear Philipia! How sad it is to know that you've been hiding here! Come now! I, Egypt! The pharaoh is here to come and catch you!" I called with so much intense emotion and sincere passion!

The feet that was sticking out, twitched and moved. There was a rustling of the leaves as it falls ever so gentle down on me.

"Who the hell?"

I froze to hear a deep voice groan, I turn to Nepal with a shocked expression "I didn't know that mongrel philipia was a man"

He shrugged in response.

"Who? Egypt?"

I look up to see the mongrel philipia, was actually the mongrel Canada; who's eyes are half open lidded- obviously he was awoken from his nap.

"Ah! Mongrel, I apologize, I thought you were that philipia" I explained.

"Oh? Maple syrup? You're looking for her too?" He said, yawning and stretching his arms back before jumping down "great timing, I was actually waiting for her here since she's usually seen in this

place"

"Is that so?"

"Why are you looking for maple syrup?" He asked with his eyes glaring at me.

Ahhh, young love, but fear not Canada, I don't involve myself with romance.

"I want to talk to Tethys, but the only way to talk to him is through her" I replied.

His expression soften and beamed "yep! Tethys does dote and spoil her" he said with a grin "and since that's your purpose, let's help each other out to look for her"

And thus, the duo became a trio, Canada was also in search of philipia for unknown reasons, but he did say it was a really important one. And I believe him, considering he waited for her in the spot where she is usually seen.

That's determination right there! And he is bursting of it.

But, because of the architecture of the school, it was rather hard to find a single female who stands out the most.

She wasn't in her dorm not in her classroom, we also asked her friends and they all saw her in different parts of the school.

"Haaaaa, I wanna see my maple syrupppp! I need to replenish my energy!" Canada, who sat down on the bench besides the vending machine; pouts and whines.

"Is she really this hard to find?" I asked.

"Nooo! Usually she's always in the garden or in her classroom or at the back west building or maybe at the rooftop, but right now, she's seen in none of those places" he replied.

Hmmm, interesting, but I do get the feeling she's trying to hide. But from whom and why?

Nepal nudges me from behind and taps his cheap looking wrist watch.

"Ahh, that is a shame, it looks like lunch time is almost over"

Canada nodded and sighs depressingly "kayyyy, I'll see ya guys then" he waved and walked back to his room in a gloomy manner.

"Shall we head back to ours?" I asked and Nepal nodded.

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3 : 35 pm

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"What do you mean she's gone home already?" I asked a random student that is cleaning in that mongrel philipia's classroom.

The student nodded "yes sir, she went home with sir Japan and sir south Korea"

"Hmmm, she moves fast, does she know that I'm looking for her?" I mumbled under my breath.

Does she have a sixth sense?

"She should be in her dorm now" the student added before going back to sweep the floor.

Ah! He's right! Since she's going home, it only means she's in her dorm now!

This is my chance! I'm such a genius!

"You have my gratitude, random student" I said and bid him farewell before going straight to the dorm building.

On our way, we saw her walking with South Korea and Japan

towards the building.

I was about to call her when an arm placed itself around my neck from behind "Hey egdyy boy!"

Canada grins and alongside him was his uncle France.

"Hello, mongrels" I greeted back.

"Sheesh, enough with the *mongrels* it's not creative" Canada berates as he removes his hand from me.

"But Russia calls you sardine-can" France teased with a smirk.

Canada flinched and slowly turn to France with an angry look.

Ignoring the two. I look up ahead to see the mongrel philipia about to enter the building.

"Canada, I thought you wanted to see philipia" I spoke and he turn to face me.

"Well, yeah, did you find her?"

I huff and smiled proudly before pointing the direction to where she is.

" I just fou--"

"Mappppppppleeeeeee!!!!! Syyyyrrruppp!!!!!!"

He screamed without even letting me finish. He ran like lightning and tackled her into a tight hug while spinning her around.

From afar, you can tell how rowdy they are now and I suddenly felt pity towards the mongrel philipia when she fell down and Canada was still nuzzling himself to her.

"Canada!" France yelled and ran up to them.

I sigh and pressed my hand on my forehead due to headache "I just want to expell two students and yet all I could find is rowdy people"

I shake my head and clicked my tongue "leaders in this generation are hopeless"

I approached the group while they help Canada separate from philipia who's almost suffocating.

"Mongrels! Silence!" I ordered yet they didn't even acknowledge my presence.

"Ahhhh!!!!!! Canada!!!!! Get off her!" Japan said while pulling Canada.

"Dominion of Canada!!! Snap out of it!" France yelled as well.

"Maple syrup!Maple syrup!Maple syrup!Maple Syrup!Maple Syrup! Maple syrupppppp!"

"Gnnhnn!!! Get off her dude!" South Korea added almost kicking Canada off.

Philipia on the other hand was trying her best to get air from his (possibly) tight embrace, even tapping his back as a signal that she's desperate for air.

Seriously. What is wrong with these leaders, so unprofessional and so unroyal-like.

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11 : 35 am [Lunch / Tue]

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I walk inside the hallway with Nepal (as always) as we headed towards the cafeteria.

The hallway was oddly quiet and no sign of students in sight. I can guess that maybe their all in the cafeteria since it is lunch time.

But it's still ominous, and I can't help but get a bad feeling.

"Nepal, is it just me or is the hallway rather empty?" I asked and he shrugged.

"We are on the third floor east building right?" I asked and of course, he shrugged.

I stopped and he stopped before I look outside the hall window and saw most of the students there - eating their lunch.

Okay, I think I have to remove this anxiety of mine that makes me think that I mistook the time of lunch and time of lessons.

Glad my mongrel friend Nepal is here.

I sigh and gesture him to continue walking with me, and when I took that one step.

A very thin string was on the floor, undetected before it was pulled from both sides and it wrapped itself around my left ankle!

I fell head first.

"Ack! What in the world?!" I exclaimed before two students ran on the opposite direction after pulling that dangerous trap on me.

Nepal didn't even hesitate to chase after them.

Who would dare harm a pharaoh?!

Years of badluck!

"Yikes, now that's going to leave a mark" I said to myself as I examine my left ankle with the strings still tangled up around it.

Does someone hate me? Or perhaps a grudge against me?! But who would dare?

"Ah! Could it be..." I jolted when I really can't think of anyone?!

I'm too lovable to be hated!!!

I sigh "rather than sitting on the cold floor, looking unattractive; I should get up" I said and slowly pushed myself up.

But there was a shot of a sharp pain and I couldn't help but wince.

They must've planned this carefully. No wonder there was no students in this hallway.

Ahhh, if I was a woman, it would've been nice if a prince charming could carry me and we will ride like the god shu through the wind and into the sun god Ra!

"Egypt?"

I was startled for a second when a soft spoken voice called out to me.

"Ahhh, mongrel philipia, how nice to see you here" I greeted with a smile, trying to act cool since I'm infront of a lady.

She hums in response until she notice my position "why are you on the floor? Did you fall?" She asked, her eyes widen from curiosity.

Looking at her now, I just realized her eyes are heterochromia; yellow like the sun and amber liked transparent fire.

Fascinating.

I laughed, trying to brush it off "of course not!" I lied; just avoid her gaze Egypt, avoid her gaze...

"M-more importantly, why are you here? Shouldn't you be eating lunch?"

"I did, just a while ago, but I just came back from putting back all the materials from the gardening club" She crouched down to my height and examine my ankle that is wrapped in a string "also, there's a string there"

She points and tried to take it away but I winced when I felt that pain again "oh! I'm sorry!" She said.

I shake my hand "this is nothing, mongrel! Worry not ha.ha.ha!"

She furrows her eyebrows before standing up and rolling up her sleeves "I'll help you!" She said, quite determined.

Well, no point hiding it, it's just a minor injury I guess a lend of help would be nice- Nepal is probably still chasing those culprits.

"That would be nice if you could find someone to help..."

"Hump!"

"... Me...huh?"

It took me a few good seconds to process and realize what is happening.

The mongrel philipia, carried me in a bridal or princess style like I'm the lightest person on earth.

"U-uhm... Mongrel?"

"Yes?"

"W-what are you doing?"

She tilts her head to the side "carrying you?"

Was that an answer or a question?

"Yeah, I can see that but, why?"

She giggled in response "that's because sir Egypt sprained his ankle so now I'm carrying him to the nurse's office!"

Wait...

"Hold on tight!"

Wait!!!!

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!"

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East building clinic

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"Haaaa.... Haaaa... H-handle the pharaoh with c-care mongrel..." I gasped for air even though I was the one being carried.

How can I not gasp for air?! She was running like she's carrying a bundled up bed sheet! I'm a pharaoh! I'm supposed to be carried by four men in a litter! Not a woman who's smaller than me and thinner than me and petite than me to carry me like I'm just a kid that tripped a fell!

"I'll treat it so don't move too much" she said as she kneeled down and placed my ankle on her leg.

Seriously, doesn't she have any sense of shame? She's wearing a skirt that's shorter than my grandma's Bob cut wig.

I hope she's wearing a spandex or short underneath that.

This school should treat women better with the uniforms.

"Ah! That's cold!" I said as I jolted back from the sudden cold spray.

"It'll just be a second" she reasured and shake the bottle again and spray it on the affected area.

Not bad, she has knowledge on first aid, her bandaging skill is like a work of art, so clean and professional.

I like it.

"Thank you mongr-- I mean..."

Well, she's proven herself enough she's more than a mongrel, I awkwardly cough and spoke.

"*Philipia*, thank you" I stated.

She looks at me for a second and smiled, it was blinding!

Ack! T-too bright!

"You're welcome!"

Even if she has skills, where in the world is the nurse? Isn't the clinic supposedly occupied by a nurse? Or a doctor? Or someone who definitely learned medicine?

Number 1 academy, pssh. What a joke.

As she placed the materials back in the medic box. The door slowly opened and Nepal was standing by the door.

Almost forgot about him.

"Ahhh, mongrel Nepal, what happened to the chase?" I asked.

"They got away" he replied, unfazed.

That's expected.

"It's fine, I'm sure it was just some useless prank" I nodded to myself since that reason sounds enough for them to do it, it must be their first time to see a great and splendid pharaoh.

"Prank? Is that the reason why you hurt your ankle?" Philipia asked and I nodded in response "are you sure it was a prank and not a direct malice towards a leader?"

I chuckled, that's some nonsense, no one would even dare lay a finger on me, their not even worthy to even fight me!

"Worry not philipia, I am none other than Egypt! Ruler of the great sands!" I proudly say yet the worry look on her face won't go away.

Tsk, tsk, tsk. A smiling face suits her more, her sad and worry expressions makes me anxious "don't worry" I said and placed an arm on her right shoulder "I'm a leader, if anyone tries to harm me,

then so be it" I grinned.

Philipia sighs and nodded "alright, but don't hesitate to report anything unusual to the student council okay?"

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Why of course I **won't**! My pride is precious!"

Her shoulders dropped and pouts "Egypt, it's better to tell"

Ahhh, never ever make a woman worry.

"Alright, if that is what you wish"

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4 : 54 pm

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Is what I said but...

"What the hell?" Finland spoke as we stare at my table and chair all vandalized and torn apart. "Who would do this?" He added as he crouched down and picked up the marker that was probably used to vandalized it.

Looking closely, there's these odd looking, long plastic like things "what is this?" I asked and pointed at it "there's something white in it"

Nepal took a closer look "it's used condoms" he replied.

Suddenly, finland turns to Nepal with a shocked exppresion "you're serious?! Ack! Disgusting! Ugh I think I'm gonna be sick"

We called the janitors and reported the incident.

Clearly, this was a sign of bullying, and the first ever reports of bullying in this school, better yet, the first incident where a leader

is being bullied- a.k.a me.

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Dorm building room [5]

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"What?! Egypt is being targeted by bullies?!" Greece exclaimed that made his bird fly away from his arm and land on the back rest of the dining chair.

"Are you sure you don't know who it is?" Brazil asked who's at the kitchen cooking for dinner tonight.

I sighed and stared at my ankle that is still recovering "I'm sure they're just jealous~" I said with a grin.

But they gave me a hopeless look.

"You serious? Even now? Sheesh" Brazil respond "not only is this a leadership offense, but the group who did this will face consequence"

Finland nodded "this is an insult"

"I don't know what happened other than what Finland told me, but an insult to one leader involves all" Estonia raised his hand.

I chuckled and shake my head "let them have their fun, I'm sure it'll die down, they'll just get bored because their dealing with me"

- Was what I said...

The next day, my table (brand new and replaced) was broken and vandalized *again*.

My locker for me to change into my PE uniform was replaced with torn shirt and missing shorts.

Everytime I walk in the hallway, someone *somewhere* would throw things at me.

Dump water on me from above while carrying a tray of my lunch.

And the most insane part is someone wrote something insulting in the classroom chalkboard with hieroglyphics... It was more insulting that it was all wrong... Just curse me with the sun god Ra instead.

"You okay?" Estonia asked while he sat besides me.

I'm slumped down and clearly depress, that hieroglyphics was really insulting, that made a huge impact on my spirit than those other things.

"I'm fine mongrel Estonia" I replied.

"You know, I never would've thought that Pangaea would have bullying, especially towards a leader" he said.

"Well, I heard the bullying is harsh in the female academy" Finland who came back from buying us snacks from the school mini Mart-spoke.

"Really?" Estonia curiously asked while Finland gave him the bread that he opened for him "why aren't they doing anything?"

He sighs and shrug "they are, but you know how city people are"

City royals are always spoiled (mostly girls) and really uncontrollable, it's in their blood and it's part of their nature. But those aren't just their personalities, they are also very good at governing and politics, no matter what job, they always do it well.

Of course, there are cities that are normal and tolerable, and usually, those people are chosen to be the capitals.

"That's understandable" I said and leaned back on the wall since the bench was placed right next to it.

"But those who are lower than them, they must be having it hard"

"I'm sure they're doing good since the rules are stricter in the female academy than the male" Finland reasured Estonia.

If only he wasn't crazy about philipia, I would've thought he was normal and just a timid, shy and conservative person.

Well, these two are crazy about her. Those sweet smiles and innocent friendship relationship is just a facade, to hide their evil nature to protect their philipia.

What do they see about her?

Sure, she's cute (as expected of a leader)

She's nice, kind and strong?

After all, she did carry me and said I was light (what a terrifying girl)

Hmmm what else?

"Hmmmm..."

"What are you thinking about?" Estonia asked which I didn't mean to answer him since I know what will happen.

"Thinking what good things that philipia have..."

There was a second of silence before the two eye's sparkle.

"She's a sunflower!"

"She's my sweetheart!"

Ah, here we go again. These mongrels really!

"And? That's all?" I asked, giving myself a personal space since their faces are inches from mine.

"She's always sparkling and she's really beautiful!" Estonia happily answered.

That's obvious.

"She's smart, hardworking, kind and she smells so nice!"

That's concerning (the smell nice part)

"Hmm, I mean, that's obviously what men would say towards a girl" I said.

Finland shakes his head "you're not seeing it Egypt, cause you're too egotistical and prideful"

I bolted up and puff my chest out while trying to look down on Finland.

"What?! Is that how you talk to a pharaoh?! Prideful?! Me?!"

"Yeh"

"Of course I am! It's one of my perks of being a proud royal! A proud pharaoh! A king!"

"Yeah, yeah, we get it, what I'm trying to say is because of those reasons you don't really *see* it" he explained.

I raised a brow "what?"

Estonia chuckled "it's because you love yourself, that's why- but! I'm not complaining! It's better that way"

Finland nods in agreement "true, true, it'll benefit me"

"Noooo! It'll benefit me more! I'm her fated pair!"

Finland then stomps his feet "Singapore and Greece is also her fated pair!"

While the two argue, I went ahead and thought about what they said "me? Love myself? Prideful? Is it wrong to be prideful?" I said to myself.

While thinking, I notice something shiny hiding between the grass on the ground not far from us.

"shinnnyyyy"

I walked towards it, limping a little (due to my sprained ankle) and crouched down to pick it up.

"Huh? It's just piece of a mirror..."

I look at it and saw my reflection, when I also saw a window from above me; open and dropped something.

"Huh?"

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"Father, what does a pharaoh do?"

He chuckled and pats my head "a pharaoh rules and leads his men, a pharaoh is the representative of a god while a god is taking a rest, a pharaoh is the rulers of the two lands; the rich and commoners"

"Woahhhh!!! Is it cool?"

"Hahaha! Well son, what do you think? If it's not I wouldn't be sitting in my throne with a smile" he replied.

I grinned as I jump a little from excitement "I want to be like you! I wanna be someone people will respect!"

"My boy, you are already respected, not just a pharaoh, but a country leader"

"Leader?"

He nodded before carrying me and walking towards the hall of history.

"The world isn't only one place, there are people like us, who's born to protect and lead the country they are born into... So no matter what you do, even if you're not a pharaoh, you're already respected"

" Wowwww !"

He smiled "but remember, not to let it get to your head, you must always be humble as much as you could, you must always be kind and

thoughtful, and a true pharaoh, a true King, a true leader, listens..."

"Always listen to your people? Like what father does?"

"Yes, my boy. Like what I do. Don't ever grow up to be prideful like me though... It always leads to bad things"

"Yes father! I'll make sure to make you so proud! I'll be the best! And I'll love my people!"

He chuckled and continued walking "don't forget to love yourself though"

"Yeah! I'll love myself too! I'll praise myself as well!"

"Hahahaha! You truly do have a blood of a pharaoh..."

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"...ypt...gyp..... Egypt!"

I blinked a few times and jolted.

"Are you okay?"

Slowly looking up, a drop of blood dropped on my cheek and slide down to my chin and neck.

That philipia, this philipia...

Was hovering on top of me, using the wall that's besides us as support to fully cover me from that object that was about to hit me...

"Sunflower! Egypt!" Finland called and ran up to us.

Philipia was helped by Finland to sit down while I just noticed the broken pieces of a vase scattered on the ground and some on her head, there was even soil and a piece of a plant.

"Somebody just tried to purposely drop this vase on you" she explained while glaring at the window that was open.

"Yeah and you just caught it!" Finland scolds.

Estonia then came running up to us and tried to find his way to philipia's side "s-sweetheart, what happened?!" He asked, visibly worried.

She chuckled and pats his head "I'm okay, but we should worry more about Egypt, It almost got him" she said and turn to me, completely ignoring the fact that blood is sliding down from her head down to her chin.

I was about to speak but no voice would come out, my hands were trembling and my body is stuck on the ground.

I thought I would shake uncontrollably but a pair of hands embraced me, burying me onto their chest that's heaving in and out, their heartbeat fast and their body cold.

"Shhh, it was scary right? You were scared right? It's okay, I am too, you're not alone"

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*" **Hail the new heir! Our new pharaoh!**"*

"I'll make father proud!"

"Your highness, please be more responsible, I can't believe you made such a simple mistake"

" B-but , father said it's okay to make mistakes"

"But when you're dealing with an entire country, it's never okay, I can't believe he made you pharaoh at such a young age, so unbecoming of a real king"

I can't move, I'm scared.

Why are they all looking at me like that? I didn't do anything wrong, it was just a mistake...

I'm scared...

Is this what father felt?

Was this the overwhelming pressure he felt?

Nobody respects me when I'm not perfect, no one will, even if I'm a country leader, or a pharaoh...

They will never acknowledge me as their ruler if I'm like this... I shouldn't be like this...

"So useless"

I'm sorry...

"Even if he's a pure royal, why is he so childish? The pharaoh's were never like this!"

I'm sorry...!

"So embarrassing"

"What a shame"

"Step down already, just let the real pharaoh take over..."

"So useless!"

"Useless"

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"You were strong, it's okay Egypt..."

The trembling wouldn't stop but, slowly, I'm calming down...

I'm calming down...

"Ah!! Sunflower!"

Suddenly, she became heavier and lost consciousness.

Students were starting to gather and at the distant is where Israel and North Korea; running towards us.

Ahhh... Why are they starting to get blurry? Why are their voices starting to get further and further away?...

So sleepy...

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The bullying stopped, since we were able to catch who the culprits were.

It was two students that Egypt had encountered before.

And the reason for all was for revenge, revenge on Egypt for humiliating him and scratching a part of his ego.

Egypt couldn't really remember him but he knows what he did.

The '*shoving the trash in his mouth*'

He forgave them, saying that school was interesting when the bullying started, although he was really angry towards the wrong hieroglyphics.

But because of their actions, not only did they insult and intended to harm a leader, they also faced treason.

But Egypt said that expelling them was enough for him since it wasn't that big of a deal for him.

And it was the very reason why he was looking for me in the first place; it was to ask these two to be expelled.

After one week, it was all back to normal and summer finally came.

Of course, like last year, our uniforms changed into our summer attire.

And since summer finally came.

"Ahhhh!!!!! The heatttt!!!! Is unbearable!!!" Joe whined while fanning himself and sweating furiously.

Same with South and J.

I guess they aren't used to the heat.

J was slumped on his table with his shirt lifted a little while mumbling something in Japanese.

South bought ten mini fans, all were placed on his desk while he's using one with his hand but still sweating furiously like Joe.

"You're overreacting, the heat isn't even that hot" Spain flicked Joe's forehead.

"Easy for you to sayyyy! I live in a cold country!" Joe berate still slumped back on his seat.

"It does snow in my country too, although not as cold as yours, but the heat is something I'm used to" he explained.

Joe rolled his eyes (he removed his sunglasses)

"Seriously, how do you people manage to live in such heat?"

I think for a second "hmmm, I guess tolerance?" I answered.

"Howwwwwww!!!!" Joe exclaimed.

I giggled and unwrap the mint candy for him before offering it to him "here" I smiled; to which he accepted.

"Not fair! I want some mint too!" J whines and I nodded.

"Of course" I said and stood up, placing a mint candy in his mouth

too, same with South and Spain.

"How about you China?" I offered.

China was unfazed by the heat and still focused on his paperwork from his student council matters.

He turn to me and smiled, he opened his mouth before I placed one too, but when he closed his mouth, the tip of my fingers were caught up which made me jump a little.

"Thanks" he smirked and winked before going back to his work.

Weird, why is my heart thumping really fast? I felt this before didn't I? I can't remember when...

Ignore it, you were just surprised..

Filip said so... Then maybe it's nothing?

I immediately went back to my seat when the teacher finally arrive.

"Alright! Sit down you crazy lunatics! South! Stop spraying your stinky ass deodorant!!!"

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6 : 30 pm dorm building room [3]

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"Whew! The heat is incredible" Israel said "I can't believe our air-condition i broken! And on summer too!"

"Sorry, I didn't know it was easy to explode" Malaysia pouts while on the floor with Indonesia besides him.

"Well, normally you don't pour baking soda and vinegar inside a machine!" Brunei scolds while holding a spatula.

"We were just trying to clean it! Look! It shows here in the video!"

Brunei sighs and massage his temple.

From where I am, I can't help but think of this as a funny scene since Brunei is holding a spatula and wearing an apron while Malaysia and Indonesia are on the floor with baking soda powder all over them.

I giggled before returning back to reading.

"Goddess, if you may" Germany said who's sitting besides me; he hands me a bottle of water.

"Uhm, okay?"

I held it and he took a deep breath before clasping his hands together and started praying.

I blinked multiple times as I watch him pray.

He's really devoted, it's really cute too.

"Thank you" he said to me with his eyes sparkling. He took the bottle of water again before gulping it all down.

"I can feel the heavenly blessed mineral quench my thirst!" He exclaimed.

"Germs! Stop that! It's too hot to get annoyed!" Israel exclaimed.

Germany ignored him and continues to pray, when suddenly- Israel stomps his feet and approached Germany.

"I said stop!"

"You! For heaven's sake! Mind your own business! I'm not even minding you! So don't mind me!" Germany berated.

Israel sighs lowly and took a deep breath before shouting near Germany's ear "it's creepy!!!"

"What nonsense are you talking about?! Ignore me and I'll ignore

you!"

"I can't! When you're always so creepy!!!"

"You're the one who's creepy!"

"No! You are!"

The room was suddenly noisy, Germany and Israel arguing while Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia are also arguing.

I sighed and closed my book.

I should go to the top, it's quiet there and I'm sure it won't be as cold like before since it's summer.

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When I got to the top of the building, I was greeted by a soft yet elegant string like music.

When I opened the door, Egypt was sitting on the edge with his legs hanging out through the bars; and on his lap was a medieval harp.

The moon was also shining bright so I was caught by how beautiful and graceful he is.

He stopped and turn to me "why hello philipia, were you captivated by my wonderful music?" He grinned proudly.

I smiled and nodded in response. Closing the door behind me, I sat besides him and hang my legs through the bars as well.

"It was really beautiful" I said.

"It's a skill of mine, I am known to be talented when it comes to musical arts" he replied.

That suits him, for a pharaoh, he shines brightly under the light of the moon.

"And, since there's a pretty lady besides me, What kind of music would you like to listen?"

I placed my hand under my chin and think for a minute "hmmm, anything?" I giggled and he chuckled.

"My, my, what a hard request" he joked and pinched my cheek lightly "hmm, how about country road? Ever heard of that song?"

I nodded "I sang it once"

He perked up and adjusted his harp "perfect, I play it and you sing it"

"Really? Okay!" I replied with anticipation.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRqM25nrIDc

[Country road take me home: Harp ver.]

Egypt played the song and it was soft and innocent in the ears, so I matched my tempo and tone with the theme of it and for the first time in here.

I felt at peace even if it was just for a moment.

When was the last time I felt so relaxed?

I don't feel uncomfortable with Egypt either, despite his personality, he's really fun to be around and he's easily impressed.

And he doesn't really say things about romance, which I'm glad.

"Your voice is almost of that the goddess Hathor!" He said as he pats my head.

"Goddess Hathor?"

"Yes, she's a very famous goddess in my country, the goddess of music"

"Oh, I didn't know, what is she like?"

"Well, she's a very famous goddess and very beautiful, she's almost equal to the goddess like Greece called Aphrodite. She's also a goddess of fertility and many more!"

I hummed in response since I'm knowing more about what his country is like.

"Which reminds me, my father once said that he met someone that reminded him of her" he said with a recalling expression.

"A woman?"

He nodded in response "a woman who saved him from death"

"I see, where is she now?"

Egypt sighed and shrug "who knows, but according to my father, she disappeared on the day of the blood moon"

Blood moon? Does he mean the lunar eclipse?

"It's a pretty interesting story that my father is proud to tell, I mean, it's a story of his unrequited love for that woman"

"He must've really cared for her"

He smiled proudly "of course, it's his fated pair"

Fated pair? This is the first time I've heard someone else having a fated pair besides me.

Can't help it, it's a very rare occurrence.

"Why did she leave if they're fated?"

He shrugged again "who knows? Maybe she isn't ready?"

Isn't ready... So you can also deny what fates wants you to do and what fates decides for you...

"She must be a very pretty lady" I grin.

"Well, I can't exactly say that"

I tilt my head to the side "why?"

He hovers his hand over his eyes and nose "her face, was covered with a veil"

"A veil?"

"To be specific, a black veil. She always wears it, not letting anyone see her face, but my father said once- when she ran away through the sand and before the blooded red moon, the strong gust of wind blew it up showing him the most captivating and enthralling beauty he's ever seen" he mimics a dramatic story teller which made me giggle.

"Well, what did he say she looked like?"

He recalls for a second "he can't really explain it since he was caught in the moment and it was almost instant, but all he could ever remember was yellow"

I raised a brow "yellow?"

He nodded "for some reason, he said it was the only thing that made him remember, something that is bright and powerful, like crystalized yellow" he explained.

"That's a weird way of saying crystalized yellow"

Egypt leaned back and used his hands as support "But when I heard that story, there's only one woman who I could think of"

"Who?"

"Well, obviously, it's Armageddon, she has yellow eyes that's like crystals"

I didn't even know she had crystal yellow eyes.

It is said that whoever has yellow eyes are her descendants, but it was later debunked when multiple people were found to have yellow eyes from all over the world. Including brother martial, China, and even mama.

And it was still a bit impossible for it to spread since her only heir was one.

But I do faintly remember I know someone else who has one... Was it, grandma?

I guess at that time it wasn't common and everyone thought it was rare. It's like how blue eyes were seen as rare and that only royals can have them, but as time goes on, the blue eyes were now seen as common (among westerns)

But crystal like yellow eyes? It's a really unique way of saying it.

"I see, so you're saying Armageddon is your father's fated pair?"

"I *think?* She is? At that time it was only Armageddon who has yellow eyes" he replied "oh, and her son's I guess but two of them died"

Ah right. Two of them fought against each other and died. And the only one to remain was their eldest son: Mr. Kenorland.

Egypt stretch his back and took a deep breath of the summer evening.

"Oh well, but that was a tale of a long time ago, in the end, she never came back so father married my mother and they had me"

"Political marriage?"

He nodded "but still, both of them cared and love me"

I soften my eyes at Egypt, he can easily adapt to new things.

He doesn't mind the unnecessary things and just look straight to what is good for him...

I envy him.

"Knowing who your fated pair is yet you can't even have them... It's quite ironic..." I mumbled but it was enough for him to hear.

He chuckled and let his head fall back as if bathing in the light of the moon "it's just called being fated, like you're a match made in heaven, yet you still have your own mind set and your own decision, so don't feel too bad about it" he said.

Somehow, his words comfort me "really?" I asked.

"Yeah, you have the right to choose, it's just a choice for you to make to either go along with it, or step out of the bounds to make your own"

I press my lips thinly together before looking down on my lap.

"But now that I think about it, if you're fated to something yet you don't want it, isn't it also your fate to rebel against it?" His eyes sparkled.

For some reason, it actually makes sense!

"Egypt you're a genius" I said.

He grins and smiled proudly "I know I am"

I giggled and look up at the moon that's shining so brightly "thank you Egypt... I needed those words"

"Hey" he called and I hummed in response, eyes still at the moon "I haven't said this but, thank you for what you did..."

I smiled and nodded before facing him "we're friends after all~"

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11 : 26 am [Mon]

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"Anuket!"

I pause and look back where Egypt and Nepal is- approaching us.

"Good day" I greeted.

"Anuket! Is it just me or is the jewel that I have for you not enough for your beauty?" He asked as he hands me a luxurious looking box; opened and with a topaz crystal in it.

It was only a week ago that he uses to call me mongrel too, I didn't even realized when he started calling me anuket.

But it's nice, I kinda like it.

"Go away eyeliner" Russia- besides me, bantered.

"Eyeliner?! These eyeliners have symbols and meaning! Only worthy pharaoh's can comprehend them!" He huff.

"Yeah, yeah, sorry bout that but, me and sunshine has things talk about" he said and wraps an arm around my neck and started walking.

"Ack! Where do you think--"

Nepal placed his hand on his shoulder and tap his watch "oh no! We still have to turn in our report" he said.

Egypt ran up to us and placed the box on my hand "for you, my anuket" he grinned and kissed my forehead before waving goodbye and ran with Nepal back inside the east building.

"Ew" Russia said and started wiping my forehead "you can sell that stone, might worth millions" he added.

I giggled and shake my head "I'll just donate it" I said and placed it in my bag "anyways, you wanted to talk to me about something right?"

He nodded and removed his hand around me "I'm asking when you'll be baptized"

Baptized?

"Ah, I'm still not sure" I replied "I guess it's not the right time yet"

"Okay, well, I just wanted to ask, but let me know when, I want to attend your last stage of baptism"

I nodded "okay"

Russia checks his phone, checking the time before turning it off and back in his pocket "well, I still gotta do something" he said and turn to the right corner of the hall.

"Okay, see you around" I waved.

"See ya around sunshine, make sure to donate that stone"

I giggled and turn to the left corner.

"Hm? Now that I think about it... How did Russia know I'm going to be baptized?"

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4 : 26 pm dorm building room [3]

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"Summer camppp!!!!" Malaysia squealed while jumping on the sofa "I'm so excited for it!!"

"It's next week right?" I asked and Brunei nodded while drinking a tea by the dining area.

"There was no summer camp before right?" He asked while taking a sip.

"Yeah, it was just a summer vacation" I replied.

Israel then came out of his room (half naked) and yawned- his V-line is in perfect shape.

I stared at it and didn't even realize him getting closer "it's rude to stare angel~" he said.

But my eyes were too fixated by how complex and how amazing it looks.

"No good, philipia loves male anatomy, she's really into those muscles" Indonesia said besides me.

Israel laughed "I know~"

"Then put some shirt on!" Brunei yelled.

"Jealous I have such a hot bo--"

"Shut your mouth your unholy vile!" Brunei then takes an empty glass that's on the table and threw it on Israel.

"Hey! You'll get someone hurt with that!" Israel bantered who caught the glass before it touched the floor or his face.

Brunei rolled his eyes "then put some clothes on!"

I chuckled as they begin to argue. But at the corner of my eyes, I saw Germany peeking from the hallway and gesturing me to come over.

I quietly slipped out from the group and approached Germany. I followed him inside the hallway until everyone's voices was a bit faded.

"What is it?" I whispered, knowing what he's about to tell me must be important since Germany doesn't really act this way for no reason.

He turns to me and looks at me with such serious atmosphere around here "Ireland and Scotland has an idea who the second spy your brother sent"

Those words sent a chill throughout my whole body, somehow, the warm room became cold...

"Who is it?"

Germany shakes his head "although they said it was still a theory, they still don't know who specifically, but it's best to avoid someone who isn't apart of this plan" he said.

I look down, fiddling with my hand "then, is it okay to add someone who we can trust?"

Germany tilts his head before caressing my left cheek "you may, goddess"

"Can we add Egypt? Malaysia and Indonesia?"

"Why? You know we can't be reckless, if one of them is the spy th--"

"I'm sure, it's none of them..." I cut him off, my words firm and sure.

Germany sighs and leaned my head close to his chest; I can hear his heart beat "I trust your judgement..." He whispered.

My body was beginning to tremble, shaking from the fear and the pain of choosing.

"G-germany.."

"Yes, goddess..."

"I'm scared"

His chest heaves in and out "I know..."

I shut my eyes close and held on to his chest "I don't know if what I'm doing is right, I don't know if it's even right..."

He didn't answer, in this quiet hall, the only noise we can hear is the faded voices of everyone from the lounge.

"Goddess, whatever you choose, I'll gladly follow you, even until death"

I shot my head up and look at him "you can't!.."

He then placed his hand on my mouth and pressed his forehead against mine, eyes looking straight in mine "that's why, whatever choice you make, you must survive through it, or else, I'll die with you" he smiled.

How can he say death so easily?

"This may look like I'm just pressuring you goddess, but, this is also a responsibility for you"

I perked up.

Germany then placed his chin on my right shoulder and leaned close to my ear "a responsibility you make in whatever choice you choose. Goddess, even if you're a being of inhuman in a human vessel..."

Vessel? Human? What?

"You still get bothered by it..." He chuckled before stepping back and removing his hand on my mouth "but no matter what, I'm still your loyal servant" he added and took my right hand and kissed the back of it.

"Germany..."

He looks at me and smiled "don't stress so much about it, don't worry- we'll make sure not to get your relatives killed"

My eyes widen as he got what I meant.

I'm so thankful, that I met such kind and helpful people. But do I deserve them?

No, no I don't. But I still have them and with that, I'm thankful.

I clasp my hand and closed my eyes "I'll make sure, to protect these people... Watch over me, mama, papa..."

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Location: unknown - time - 00:00 - date: January 18, 20XX

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Egypt is calling...

Accept _ decline

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[On call]

"Where are you gu- oh you're on your way are you?"

"It was tough but we managed, thanks to singapore "

"The replacing was the hardest one, but the materials and dummy one is well made don't worry"

"When we opened the ---- we were in a trance for a second! It was amazing, she was truly, beautiful!"

" Ahh ! Shhhh... That's right, we can't let them wake up"

"Oh, I can see the van now-"

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Call has ended

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< < < End of chapter 9 : Pulchritudinous

> > > Coming Chapter 10 : Ataraxia

_____

Fact : Scarlet loves leche flan

Fact 2 : The 5 man made islands were named after deceased continent leaders.

Fact 3 : The kataas-taasan family were all killed.

Fact 4 : Estonia keeps a recorder and records philipia's voice whenever they talk.

Fact 5 : Cosmo's room is especially made so that he can breath even without the helmet.

Fact 6 : Iran, Vietnam, Poland and Sweden often visits her room.

Fact 7 : She spends her lunch with J, Spain and south often.

Fact 8 : Australia's room is full of animals that he receives complaints a lot from the next door.

Fact 9 : Brasilià is now in charge of his country's budget.

Fac t 10 : Your mistakes does not define you.

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[Heya! How are you? Good? Good, good!]

[I know the chapters I've been updating hasn't been much near to the main plot but! Don't worry!]

[We're almost there, just uhm... A few more characters to tackle then we good~]

[Also, have you guys been keeping up with the hints? *Winky winky*]

[I drop a lot but, I'll leave it to you guys ^^ I enjoy reading your theories, but I enjoy it more when some of you get it right]

[Anyways, hoped you enjoyed it and see ya on the next wan]

[Much love ~~]

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Chapter 10 : Ataraxia

[image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy]

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"Ahh!~ haaa... Haaa... i-it hurts"

"I know J, but I'll give it another push so relax"

"P-philipia... It's too much I ca-- ahh!~!"

"That's it, easy right? You're almost there"

"Haaaa!~... Haaaa~~! Ahh!~~... It hurts!"

"Breath J, just a little more until it becomes loose"

"nghh!! Ahhhh!!~!! Haaaa!...!"

"What the hell are you two doing?"

I turn to Spain and smiled "I'm helping J do the middle split"

"AHHHHH!!!!!!! NO MORE! NO MOREEE!!!!!"

"We can see that but, the way you two talk makes people misunderstand" he said.

"Hmm? Oh I'm sorry, we'll be more quie--"

"NGAAAAHHH!!! MY THIGHS ARE BEING RIPPED APART! YAMETEEE!!!!!!!"

I flinched and immediately step back "sorry J, I guess I pushed you to m--"

"Oops!" Joe who purposely tripped himself; fell on J's back, pushing him even more all the way to the floor.

He was silent for a second, and that second turned into a minute.

"J? Are you okay?" I asked as I crouched down to check on him.

"I'm doing it! Look! Look!" He suddenly beamed and perfectly did a middle split in one day.

"See? All you need is a rough push then you're good to go!" Joe thumbs up and Spain applaud boredly.

"1 more minute guys!" Tito yelled and helped the others.

"Alright, get up now" Joe got off J and offered helped him up but, J simply held his hand and didn't budge from his position.

"Hey... Move" Spain spoke.

But J didn't reply for a second.

"I'm... Stuck" he muttered.

"You're what?" Joe asked and leaned down a little.

"I'M STUCK. WahhhhhHHHHHHHH!!!!!!! I'M STUCK!!!!"

"HAHAHAHAHAH!!!!" South came up behind us whIle hysterically laughing with Joe besides him who's on the floor, wheezing and face flushed red.

"Oh my g- HAHAHAHHA!!!!"

"You better... Ehem! H-help yourself up" Spain spoke who's holding back his laughter as much as he could.

"WAHHHHH!!! philipia! Help!!!"

I immediately went to his side and slowly help him sit up but whenever I move him, he would wince and his legs would tremble.

I think he forced his body too much...

"Hey! Hey! J! Smileee!!!!"

"Nooo!!!!!!!"

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J sobbed uncontrollably while Joe and south were still laughing while examining the picture they took of him.

"This is a shame! Not only is my legs feeling like it's being pricked by a million needles, my reputation is also pricked!" He cried and blew his nose.

"Why did you even want to do the middle split?" Spain asked who's holding the box of tissues.

"Cause I saw philipia do it and I thought I could try it!"

I point myself "me?"

"Yeah! I thought it looked cool! I also saw Spain did somewhat of a wall split"

"But philipia and I have done it multiple times"

I nodded "I've been flexible my whole life and Spain exercise a lot" I added.

J looked at the both of us, googly eyes and lips trembling "unfair! How unfair!"

Spain crossed his hands on his chest "that's because all you ever do is play games and sit down" he bantered.

J pouts and sulks, not even bothering to argue back since it's true (I've witnessed it a lot)

"I'm surprised you haven't gone obese with your diet too" he added.

J sniffled and blew his nose "I don't get fat no matter how much I eat" he replied.

Spain froze and stared at J with malicious aura behind him "what? You're saying some people starve themselves to stay fit and yet you? **You?!** You don't get fat?!"

Spain is really angry by that notion, I wonder why?

"What? Is it my fault my metabolism is faster and stronger than average!?" J defend.

"Why you?! What are you a Mary Sue?! What's next? You cry crystals?!"

J Looked perplexed and so was I "Mary Sue?" I questioned.

"What is up with that?! Can't you just say I'm blessed?! I'm sure philipia is the same, right?"

They both turn to look at me- I tilt my head to the side "me?" I asked.

"You don't get fat don't you? You don't gain weight" J said.

I blinked a few times and shake my head "I do get fat and I do gain weight, my diet is just strict because it's my brother who insisted it" I explained.

J froze and I heard a crack somewhere from Spain, he grabbed J's head and leaned close with an irritated look "damn you J!" He yelled and pressed his feet on J's thighs.

"Ow! Owwwww!!!!!! Owwww!!! Ow! Ow!!! S-spainnnn!! Staphhhh!!!" J begged while holding his ankle.

I sighed and went to Tito who's helping other students stretch with China.

"Tito, do you have an ice pack?" I asked.

He faced me while pushing the back of the student on the floor "ice pack? For what?" He wondered with a puzzled expression.

"Uhm, it's just, I kind of pushed J a little *too* hard and his thighs

started to go violet" I explained while looking down.

I'm like a little girl who confessed that I broke his favorite axe.

He hummed in response before standing up "good job" he said and pats my head.

G-good job? So what I did to J was actually right? Keep pushing even if it hurts?

I blushed and nodded "y-yes Tito" I bashfully said.

China came up behind me and said "don't teach her unnecessary things, professor"

Tito laughed "what? As her uncle I am proud, but as your teacher, that's messed up" he said.

I flinched and shrink between my shoulders "yes ti-- I mean, professor"

"Aww, don't sulk, you didn't know so it's fine, I'll just take J to the clinic to have the nurse give him an ointment" he said.

I nodded and smiled "he's over there" I point to where J is now on the floor (probably) unconscious while Spain is huffing heavily as if he carried or punched someone hard.

Joe and south were still in their own world, laughing while looking at the phone.

I shiver when I suddenly feel Tito release a deadly air around him.

Oh, he's angry. He hates it when people slack off during his time.

I've seen brother Greg punished many times when he and brother would train with Tito.

And I can't really say it was a good punishment.

I gulped and step back behind China who looks at me confused.

"Hmmm, I see, looks **fun**..." He mumbled before walking towards

them.

"Hey, why are you hidin--"

"AHHHHHHHH!!!!!!"

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"M-my back... I thought for sure he was going to break my back..." Joe grumbled whole limping as we walk back to our room.

Spain now had a bandage around his head.

South is sobbing while carrying his half broke phone.

And J... Well he was...

He was dragged by one leg to the nurse's office while unconscious by Tito.

"I never thought your uncle is a scary man" China comments.

I sighed and nodded "he's still an old school so his anger is also old school" I explained.

Joe chuckled and crack his back that Tito stepped on earlier "well he certainly is, my spine was about to break"

"Sorry if he hurt you"

He shake his head and pats my head "it's fine, mahal... Oh- sorry" he quickly shut his mouth.

I flinched and look up to Joe who massage his temple "sorry bout that, I can't really shake that name off of my mouth"

"M-my phone..." South sobbed and Joe chuckled.

Joe wraps an arm around south, who's still mourning for his broken phone and walked ahead of us.

I soften my gaze at his back.

"Mahal..." I flinched and look over to Spain "it has two meanings in your country... Right?" He whispered besides me, eyes looking straight to where we are walking.

I mumbled "yes" and shrink between my shoulders.

"And I'm sure he's not calling you expensive, but it's the other one... Right?"

I didn't reply but I guess he already knows the answer.

"Why?"

I shake my head "I don't know either, but I can somehow recall him calling me that way"

"Hmm, why would he call you that way? There has to be a reason..."

I don't know what reason, and I don't think I want to know the reason.

But I know for sure, he called me like that just as a nickname.

At least, that's what I remember...

"His memories are heavily suppressed, it won't be any time soon that it'll come back to him" he added and pats my shoulder.

Why does he call me that way again? Other than the fact that it's a nickname he gave me, but why?

Why *Mahal?*

"Ma..h...ta..."

"Ngh...!"

Suddenly, I felt throb in my head, it was so painful that I bit my lower lip.

"You okay?" Spain asked besides me.

I somehow can't reply him..

China then approaches us, Joe and south stop and turn their heads to my direction.

"You look pale" Spain added and placed his hand on my forehead "you have no fever, what's wrong?"

I bite my lower lip and turn to him, holding his shoulder as tight as possible, scared to even let go I might fall...

"Head, hurts..." I spoke and manage to get any words out.

Ugh. It feels like my head is being split apart, it's spinning...

Everything is spinning...

"Mahal!... Where are you?!"

Ngh!

"Hey! Philipia!"

Their voices are fading and getting further and further away.

So heavy...

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I gasped when I suddenly felt like the very air inside me was sucked out.

Where am I?

"Help!"

Smoke?

Gathering what strength I have, I pushed myself from the ground and looked around me.

And everything around me was nothing but smoke and engulfed in fire.

"Help me!"

I jolted when a sudden shriek echoed around the place.

Where am I?

" Lakapati !!"

Suddenly, a man who's very much Filipino, dressed in tribal clothes back in our time; ran.

But his body ran past me, as if I was nothing but a mere fog.

I look back to see him talking to a woman, a woman who has clear, crystal, yellow eyes...

Who...

" Kuya dumakulem !" She yelled- the woman, who had yellow eyes.

Clear as day, clear as the burning sun.

" Lakapati ! What are you doing here?! Go and hide!"

Why... Why does that man also have yellow eyes?

Even within this thick smoke, their eyes were glowing.

" Lakapati !!" Another woman yelled "kuya!"

" Anitun !? I told you all to hide!"

"The house! Their burning the house! Lolo is... Lolo is still there!"

The woman, lakapati and the man, dumakulem's faces paled.

They nodded and ran towards the direction where the woman Anitun ran from.

I look down to my hand and I can see through it.

Is this a dream?

I jolted when I heard a loud sound coming from the direction where they ran.

I followed the source and found a house, burning, it was burning so bright in this dark, cold night.

"Why?! Why are you doing this?! We didn't do anything wrong!" Lakapati yelled to the man- who's face I can't see due to the smokes.

"Only one... Can rule, a land..." The man said and raised his hand holding an itak .

But before he could hit lakapati, dumakulem immediately blocks it with his itak , but his body was now wounded and blood was dripping.

Anitun who sneaked behind the man, held an itak and raised it in the air , ready to stab or attack him.

But before she could hit him, he takes out another knife and stabbed her right in the chest.

She coughed out blood and dropped the itak .

The sight made me shiver and weak on my knees.

Her crystal yellow eyes, slowly fades and burned out, before falling on the ground.

There was a short silence before lakapati's scream broke it.

" N-no ..." I muttered, yet no one can hear me.

" Anitun ! Aaghhh !!! You'll pay! You'll pay with your life!!!" Dumakulem's voice was filled with anger.

He charged at the man again with all his might...

Yet...

" Agghh !!!.... nghn ..."

5 men, who I know are our kind, stabbed him and hit him with their itak multiple times.

They suddenly came out of nowhere!

This scene... I can remember the great people who once tries to free our country, walked the same fate...

And died the same way...

As the place grew quiet, the only people left was lakapati and the men around her.

Looking down on her.

Their body was stained with bright, fresh blood, their hands, their shirt, their weapons.

Lakapati sobbed uncontrollably on the ground.

"How could you... We did nothing wrong, we helped you, we helped our people... We didn't want power, we just wanted to serve..." She mumbled through broken tears.

"Your very existence is a threat... One day, an offspring of your will take down what's mine..." The man then cleans his itak with his sleeve before stepping closer to lakapati.

She raised her head to him "My family..." She mumbled through gritted teeth "my family will find salvation and your family will find damnation..."

"Hahahahaha! Your family? Really? How can they? When they will cease, to exist?"

Raising his hand again, he aimed for her head.

And every second that ticks by, my heart was pounding, and pounding, and pounding...

"No! No!!!!" I yelled and broke free from my paralyzed body.

"No!!!" I yelled again as I reach out my hand.

But as I got closer, I finally get to see who the man was.

And when I did, my heart stopped.

"You..."

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"No!! Agh! Nmhn!!..."

Getting up from the bed, I immediately went to the restroom and threw up.

"Philipia? Are you okay?!" J called behind me while sitting on the bed.

Huh?

I'm in school? In the infirmary?

I threw up again and felt like my very inside was twisting and knotting.

"Ghn!... Bitter..." I mumbled from the aftertaste.

Standing up, I flushed the toilet, washed my hand and rinse my mouth from the sink before closing the door behind me.

I glance over to J who is sitting on the bed with cold packs on both thighs.

"You look, pale..." He spoke with worried expression.

"How long was I out?" I asked.

He thinks for a minute and checked his time "it wasn't long, maybe about 20 minutes when they brought you here"

I look over to the wall clock behind him; *2:20 pm* just one more hour before class ends.

I nodded and walked back to my bed and sat there while facing J.

"You okay? You kept mumbling in your sleep" he said and placed his hand on mine.

I bite my lower lip and held my head.

"I think? I just don't seem to remember what I dreamt, but I know it was a bad one... It makes me sick"

J stared at me, worried "I can tell, you kept whimpering"

"I was?"

He nodded "-and sweating furiously, so I had to uhhh... Wipe it, my bad" he grins.

I shake my head and smiled "it's okay, I'm glad you did, thank you J"

J then takes a towel to wipe my sweat off and lightly dab it on my forehead "you're still sweating..."

His voice was low and barely a whisper, but it was still loud since in this room.

There's only us two.

"Philipia, I've been thinking" he spoke and still continued patting the towel.

"Thinking about?"

He was quiet for a second before opening his mouth to say "I've been thinking if I love you..."

My heart rate was suddenly getting faster and faster.

Love me?

"Even though it can be obvious... I think, but I haven't really told you this, right?"

I look down and shake my head.

"Hey" he called and gently caress his hand on my cheek and turn my face to him.

"Can I say, *I love you,* to you?"

What should I say? Is it the same as Israel? Or is this a different one?

I'm scared to answer I might break him... I'm scared to hurt him...

I'm scared I might do the same to him like I did to Israel.

It was a selfish and insensitive answer that I gave him.

"Philipia..." He called again, this time, his voice much lower but with a certain tone in it.

"I don't know... But it's your feelings... Not mine" I replied.

J chuckled and pressed his forehead against mine.

I can feel his breath, I can hear his heart beat...

"So I can say *I love you so much I could die?*"

I look at him again- I can see my reflection in his eyes.

"Why? Why do you love me...?"

"I don't know... But I'm not dense on my own feelings, I can tell the difference, I can tell what emotion it is..." He replied.

"But if you say you love me, I can't return your feelings..."

"Mmh... I know, that's why... Even if you don't choose me, can I still stay by your side?"

I placed my hand on top of his on my cheek, biting my lower lip, holding back a cry.

"Then how can you love someone else if you'll stay by someone like me...?"

J smiled and leaned closer, our lips just barely an inch away from touching.

"I'm fine with it, I don't mind getting hurt, I don't mind the burning sensation to mark my body, I don't mind you leaving me behind... Your happiness, is also my happiness..."

"But why?! Is love really that... Cruel?"

Suddenly, his lips crashes into mine, the soft sensation, the warmth, the beating of a heartbeat...

I can't seem to follow, everything was being dropped on me all at once yet...

Yet- I can't seem to hate it.

"Yeah..." He breaths out a husky one "it's really... Really cruel to the point... It's unbearable"

I catch for my breath, not even realizing that I was holding it in.

"Philipia... I don't know if this is from guilt or simply just something I owe" he added and leaned closer again "but I'm damn sure... I care, I think, I see, and love you so fucking... Much"

He gritted his teeth while fat tears flowed in his eyes "the moment you laid eyes with me before, at that river, at the bright sunny day... I knew for a fact I just can't let you go..."

J sobbed loudly and falls to my chest and stayed there, bent over

and shoulders slumped.

"I can't let you go..." He whispered again "that's why... I want to stay by your side even if it's means watching you with someone else!"

I can't move, I can't reply...

What do I say...

"Even if it means you're in someone's arms, I don't care... I just want to stay by your side"

I look down at J again, trembling and still sobbing.

I want to comfort him, I want make the pain go away!

But I know every word I'll say will still hurt him...

I shrink between my shoulders and shut my eyes closed "h-how can you say such things!"

J looks up at me, eyes bloodshot from crying.

"How can you say such selfish things to the person who can't even return your feelings!"

The tears still manage to escape, I sob and talk in between.

"I can't say *I love you too* I can't say it with the same feeling as yours, so I can't return it..."

"-No matter how much I try, no matter what I do, I can't seem to feel what you feel..."

"- But I know I can't let you do what you want; staying by my side knowing nothing what will happen in the future..."

"I can't hurt you J... I don't want to hurt you, you deserve so much more"

I whimpered, eating my sobs down in my throat cause I don't want to break down.

"My words hurt you, my actions hurt you! I don't want it, I want you to be happy...!"

And that was the last straw.

I broke down and cried while clutching on to him.

But then, he started laughing and giggling.

I sniffled "why are you laughing?!"

J grinned and pressed his forehead against mine "you're just too cute! Hahaha! So, so cute..."

I pout "You're such a tease"

J laughed louder, "I'm sorry, so sorry. It's just, I think I said so much huh?"

I look at him, his tears finally subsiding.

"After that time where I regained my memories, the machine that erased it, my past with you, I started to stay low and try to collect my thoughts"

He placed his head on my left shoulder and stayed there.

"When I first met you without any memories, I can immediately feel attraction towards you, either because you're cute? Or because you're someone I know before"

"But when I regained my memories, I started to look back where it started and think to myself *do I like you? Or do I love you?*"

"So I tested it out but, nothing seems to work, and whenever I see you, I can't take you off of my chest and mind..."

"- I got so annoyed by it that, I got to a conclusion that I'm just a friend and you are just a friend"

"I accepted it, and it doesn't hurt much whenever I see you spend time with someone else... Being hugged and tackled by Canada,

Ukraine or Poland. Becoming a fated pair with Estonia, Singapore and Greece..."

"I still care, it's still there, I still get overprotective, I still get jealous but, not to the point that I would cry..."

"I thought it was finally gone and that I see you nothing more than just a friend but then... This"

He showed me the towel he used on me.

"This has to happen. You, being brought here, unconscious, whimpering, calling, sleep talking..."

"Leaving me all alone with you cause the others still had class to attend..."

"- I finally, *definitely*, got to a real conclusion..."

J looks up at me and held both my cheeks, pulling me closer to him "that I still *love you*... I was merely denying it because of what I did..."

He sighed and pressed his forehead against mine, the tip of our nose brushing against each other, and again... Our lips just inches away.

"Maybe it's because I've never been left alone with you since we changed room... But when I was given a chance, just watching you over already made me change my mind in mere minutes than when I changed my mind you're only a friend for me..."

He chuckled and pinched both my cheeks "you're so dangerous... This is dangerous..."

He stayed there like that, pinching my cheeks and staring into my eyes.

"I thought this was my chance but I guess I jumped too fast... But I am serious on what I said that I'll stay with you"

J released me and sat back down to his bed, fiddling with his thumbs "no matter what happens. I'll stay, your words don't hurt

me, they just continue to encourage"

"Encourage...?"

He nodded "knowing you don't know what it feels, it encourages me to let you feel it, and I want to be the first or even if I wasn't, I still want to be the one to ignite that fire in you again..."

I look down and nodded.

"Okay..." I simply replied.

J laughed again and I pout.

"Please don't laugh"

He laughed even louder.

"Cause you're adorable, that's why"

I shrink between my shoulders and gently kick his feet.

I giggled when he suddenly winced and realized that his thighs are still swollen.

Romantic love, intimacy, a warm sensation, affection and touch.

I still really don't get any of it but...

"You really pushed me to the brink of death earlier~"

I think I'm starting to understand.

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6 : 25 am [Summer camp day]

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"Do you have your toothbrush? Towel? Pillow? Lotion? Toothpaste? Water bottle? Extra snacks? An--"

"Calm down Brunei, you're like a mother who's sending their kid to a field trip" Israel berates.

"How could I not?! She's the only female there! And we'll be in an island! Island full of men!"

"Including you?" Malaysia pops out behind him with a lollipop made out of Milo that we made last night.

Brunei clicked his tongue.

"Don't worry, you'll be partnered with Egypt and Nepal with Joe right?" Indonesia asked who's walking besides me.

I nodded "yeah, I think I'll be okay"

"You *think?* Phil, men are still men!" He exclaimed.

I giggled and nodded "don't worry, I have the taser and pepper spray you gave me" I reassured.

"You know how to use it right?"

I nodded in response.

Today is the summer camp day, were out here walking in the outside corridor with our bag of clothes and materials for camping.

And ever since that day with J, I've been learning and trying my best to be understanding with other people's feelings.

Although I fail a lot since, as expected.

I can't feel anything.

"Woah, look at that ship"

Indonesia said in awe as all our heads trail the size of the massive ship.

It honked and it feels like the trees and building were shocked as well.

The ground was vibrating too.

"Whoahhhh!!!!! I can't hear anything anymore!!!" Malaysia beamed and ran off to his group which are Vietnam and Singapore.

"Well then, see ya" Indonesia waves at us and followed behind Malaysia.

"Hey germs, there's Arabia and Mexico" Israel points towards the direction where Arabia is helping Mexico, who's clothes were scattered "mexy must've brought too much" he added and run off to them after waving at me.

"Well then, I'll see you at the island goddess" Germany waves and followed Israel.

Brunei sighed besides me and carried his bag "I'm with Poland and Sweden, be careful alright? Phil?"

I giggled and nodded "yes, you too Brunei"

We waved at each other and he went to his group.

The ship was massive yet each group will be sleeping in one room for one day till we get to the island since vaalbara is far compared to the other islands.

That reminds me.

Norway hasn't replied to any of my texts yet.

I did text him yesterday we'll be departing today. Maybe he really is busy now, or his phone was taken away.

But wherever he is, I hope he's okay.

"Anuket!" Egypt called and waved his hand from crowd of students all scattered around.

I held the strap of my big, camping bag close to me and ran towards them.

"You didn't bring much huh?" Joe comments who's sitting on one of his bag and eating chips.

"Well, we won't be staying there for too long anyways" I replied and noticed, both Egypt and Joe brought 5 bags and the contents are unknown, and I don't wish to know.

"That's a lot" I said.

"It's few!" They both said.

"R-really?"

Joe shakes his head and sigh "I can't even bring all my awesome summer clothes, and I even ordered a lot online!"

Egypt held his chest looking devastated "I asked my servants from my country to deliver me my best outfits for this summer and they can't allow me bring all 20 of my bags?! That's preposterous, am I right Nepal?"

Nepal replied with a nod, and still with an empty expression.

"I knew you'd understand!"

"There you are!"

I look back and saw Tito with shades on, it suits him.

"Good morning" he greeted and removed the shades, and for a split second, I felt a shiver run through my body and stumble back.

"Woah, you okay?" He asked.

I suddenly felt scared and at the same time, Tito looked oddly familiar...

Like I've seen a face like him somewhere...

"I'm okay, I must be still in a daze" I explained.

"You're still sick anuket?" Egypt asked and I shake my head in response.

"Here" Tito then takes out a small bottle and squeezed it.

It released some sort of white content and he poke it on my nose and forehead "sunscreen" he said and spread it across my face "so that you won't feel the heat much and it won't ruin your skin"

"T-thank you... Tito"

"That won't be an issue, female leaders bodies heal" Joe remarked.

"I know but I still want to do it" Tito bantered and huffed " anyways I'll help you guys"

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Tito and some other people helped us with our stuffs and lead us to our room.

"This is where you'll be staying" he said and opened a ship door.

It was a cozy small room with two double decks on both sides and a window at the middle.

Perfect for a short trip.

"It's nice"

"It's small" Joe groaned.

"This is a big ship yet this is our room?" Egypt complaints.

Tito sighed and knocked on the other door that's infront of ours.

It opened and it was Scotland "oh, professor jack? What's you braw men doin'n... Oh" his eyes landed on me and he froze.

There was a second of silence before Tito snapped his finger near his face and Scotland faced him "ahh, aye? What is it professor?"

"Show him your room so they can stop complaining" Tito remarked.

Scotland was confused at first but still did what Tito asked.

And there, the same room and with ireland, Australia and NZ.

"Philipia!" NZ waved and hopped down from his bed at the top deck and gave me a hug "I haven't seen you in forever!"

"Weird, you guys just saw each other yesterday" Joe mumbled.

"Sham, what are you guys doing there?" Ireland stood up and leaned on the doorframe.

"I'm here to show these two buffoons that everyone has the same room" Tito explained, glancing at Egypt and Joe.

Ireland laughed and nudges Scotland "welp, I don't mind when I get to see a feekle lass" he said and took my hand an kissed the back of it.

I haven't heard Ireland speak in such deep Irish accent, same with Scotland.

"Hey philipia!" Australia waved while carrying his pet snake *silver*.

I waved and smiled.

"Well then, rest up and we'll wake you all up when it's ready to go" Tito said and pats my head before leaving.

"Rest lots okay?" NZ Squishes my cheeks together and I nodded in response.

Joe and Egypt had to deal with the small room, though, it wasn't really *that* small but it wasn't that big either.

I placed my single camping bag on my bed at the top deck before climbing the small ladder and laid down.

"Anuket, here"

I look over to Egypt who's peeking at the rail of the bed, he hands

me a necklace that has yellow sapphire.

"Wear it, even if it's just for the whole summer camp" he smiled and poke my nose before going back to his deck.

I smiled and examined it, the reflection it gives and the color it shines.

Yellow...

Somehow, I feel like I'm forgetting something- *something* very important.

I've seen this type of bright yellow before... But I can't remember.

"The ship is starting, it's sailing away now~" Joe remarked.

I look over to the small window and looked outside as the ground earlier that were full of students were now a bit empty.

The ones left were the crew who is working on this ship packing a few more things.

I sighed and lay back down to my bed and stare at the ceiling that I can reach and touch.

As the ship starts to sail, my eyelids became heavier and heavier...

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"Mahal! Where are you!"

Joe?

"Where are you!?"

I'm here Joe! Can't you see me?

"Mahal where are you?! Answer me! Yell, scream! Call my name!"

I'm here! Joe!

Joe!...

America! ...

"Philipia!"

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"Philipia"

I jolted back away "w-what...?"

"Whoah, calm down, you're sweating beads" Joe remarked "you okay?"

I sighed and relaxed myself and nodded "yeah, it's just, the headaches again"

"You haven't recovered yet? Hmm, maybe you shouldn't push yourself today" he said.

"I'm okay really, ah but. You wanted to talk to me?"

Joe stepped on his deck and hang his arms on the side rails "it's 11 am and they're serving lunch, wanna come and eat?"

I think for a minute and nodded "okay, how about Egypt and Nepal?"

"They're already there" he replied and stepped down.

I climbed down from my bed and wore a jacket before following Joe outside.

The door to NZ's room is open yet empty, it must've meant that they've went to the cafeteria as well.

I didn't even realize that I've slept for 6 hours now.

I sighed and held my forehead while walking behind Joe in this narrow yet long hallway of a ship.

"You know, you can stay in the room I can just bring you lunch" Joe said, not looking at me.

"No, it's okay, it'll hurt more of I stay in bed, maybe I'm just not used to traveling with such a huge ship"

Joe glance over to me from his right shoulder "really? Well, if you want to do a boat ride just ask me, I'm quite good at it"

I smiled "okay, thank you Joe"

As we turn to the corner, Joe bumped into someone "whoops, sorry pal"

I perked up and it was Iran with Vietnam.

"Iran, Vietnam!" I beamed.

Iran smiled widely and immediately hugged me, same with Vietnam.

"Lotus!"

I giggled and hugged them back.

"You guys done eating lunch?" Joe asked.

"Yeah, the others are there too as well" Vietnam replied.

"Hmm, where's cosmos? Aren't you two always together?"

Iran shakes his head and signed: *he's riding a helicopter instead, he doesn't like riding a ship.*

"Maybe it's because he's from outer space" Joe joked.

The three of them chuckled and nodded "that's true, his reaction was indescribable when he knew we were going to ride a ship" Vietnam added.

Joe grins and said "literally, indescribable"

They laugh.

Me and Cosmos aren't really close but I can't help but get a feeling that he's having a hard time adjusting.

Poor him.

"He's fine red rose, he just hates cramped places"

Iran signed and I sighed.

"Okay"

"Well then, see ya tomorrow at the island lotus! And after the activities! Let's swimmm!" Vietnam pinched both my cheeks.

Everyone likes to pinch my cheeks today.

I giggled "hehehe, hhookay" I replied while being pinched.

Vietnam nuzzles his nose on mine and continued on his way with Iran.

"See you red rose and Joe"

Joe nods in response and I waved.

"Let's go, I'm hungry"

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"Philipia! Joe!"

We turn towards the direction where J, Spain, China, Russia and Kazakhstan are.

We both waved at them but Joe suggested we should get food first.

The cafeteria was full of students from the whole academy, though

thanks to the spacious, massive and large area, it fit the whole students and it still has some vacant seats too.

Thank goodness; I'm not a fond of crowds too.

Both me and Joe took a tray and walked around to get any food we desire, almost like an eat all you can buffet. There are even chefs on the other side of the counters.

"What is this?" Joe asked.

"That's a lumpia"

He tilt his head "Lum...pia?"

I giggled and shake my head "it's lumpia- spring rolls for short"

He perked and nodded "oh I see"

"It have different flavors too, you should try it Joe, it's good"

Joe didn't hesitate to put 5 pieces on his plate before taking one and taking a bite.

"Oh! This is good! Juicy meat too, nice!"

I giggled and continued taking any food my stomach can ingest.

After taking what we can eat, we went to the table where J and the others are.

"Hey sunshine, nice jacket" Russia greeted.

I look at what I wore and smiled "thank you, Scotland gave it to me as a gift"

"Hmmmm, that Scottish huh" he mumbled "well, take a sit and eat, it'll be a long day towards vaalbara"

I sat besides Joe and Spain and across Russia and Kazakhstan.

"Heya~ you're philipia right? I believe this is our first time talking" he smiled and offered a handshake.

I nodded and accepted it "nice to meet you"

"Huh? You guys haven't met? I'm pretty sure you already did... Oh wait, I think it was in my dream" russia muttered the last part.

We turn to him and tilt our heads "dream?" I asked.

Russia flinched and shake his head "n-no, it's nothing, nevermind"

China then coughs and Russia shrinks between his shoulder and ate even more.

I ignored it since it must've been unimportant and proceed to eat.

"Oh yeah, why is the island called vaalbara? It's so weird" J wondered whole munching a teriyaki.

"Oh? You don't know?" Kazakhstan responded and we all shake our heads.

"That's the name of the first continent leader" Russia replied "she married Ur who is also a leader and had a kid named Columbia"

I think I've heard of that story in one of the lessons in school.

"Basically they're making man made islands and naming it to their deceased leaders?" Spain raised a brow to which Kazakhstan nodded in reply.

"But if you want to know more we can just visit the museum after the summer camp before the vacation"

"Museum?" China asked.

"Yeah, it's not your normal museum since everything you want to know about deceased continent leaders and even Armageddon are all displayed and recorded there" he replied.

Armageddon.

Now that he mentions it, Egypt said that his father's fated pair must've been Armageddon.

Oh right, speaking of Egypt.

Where are they?

I look around the place and saw Nepal and Egypt eating at the corner.

I wonder.

Whenever I look at them both, I feel some sort of sadness and solitude. As if they want to be away from the crowd and just be in their own shells.

Or maybe I'm over thinking it?

I don't know if it's just me but, Egypt is probably hiding some sort of sadness within him, even if he's always a proud and happy man.

His eyes tells me he's lonely and scared.

And Nepal, I can't shake the feeling of lamenting.

"Uhm, Kazakhstan?"

"Yes?"

"Was there a story that Armageddon ever left her country?" I asked.

He thinks for a minute and shake his head "nope, Armageddon is bound to her country, and she despise travelling. I think she had some sort of trauma when she travelled before when she was a kid so after that, she never did anymore"

She never did?

Hmmm...

"Why?" Russia asked.

I shake my head and look back down to my food again "just curious..."

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We got back to our room after eating lunch, Nepal and Egypt were still out so me and Joe went first.

"Oh nice, I didn't even see that there's a bathroom here!" Joe exclaimed "oh, but it's a bit small, yikes, are the male students really that too many that this huge ass ship isn't enough?!"

Joe groans but still went inside.

I giggled since I can still hear him grumbling.

I stretch my arms backwards and leaned back on my bed using my hands for support.

I stare at the ceiling that I can just touch before falling down to my bed and sigh.

"Armageddon never travelled after a certain accident when she was little huh..." I mumbled.

Then, who was that woman that Egypt's father met? Why does it makes me feel restless?

" Lakapati !.."

Ugh. Headaches again.

I really feel like I'm forgetting something.

And it's really important.

I placed my hand on my chest to feel my heart pounding, but then I realized I'm wearing the necklace Egypt gave me.

I examined it again and it's really beautiful.

So bright, almost like it's glowing.

It's crystalized too...

"Pretty..."

I was startled when the door suddenly open where Egypt and Nepal came in "oh, anuket, how was your lunch?"

I smiled "it was good, how about yours?"

Egypt sighed in disappointment, he sat down on the lower deck while Nepal climbed on the top deck.

"The Egyptian food I ate was not like how my country made it, so disgraceful" he pouts.

I guess he really do cares what his country has.

"I'm sorry to hear that"

Egypt shakes his head "it isn't your fault anuket, it's those chefs, that's why me and Nepal filed a complaint!" He proudly said as he crossed his arms on his chest.

"R-really?"

Poor chefs.

"Yeah, anyways, where is that mongrel America?"

He called Joe a mongrel.

"I'm here your highness!" Joe yelled from the bathroom that echoed his voice from the inside.

"I didn't even see that there's a bathroom here"

"Joe said the same thing"

I look over to Nepal who's leaned on the wall and started reading a book.

"Egypt, want to play?" I invited and Egypt perked up.

"What game?"

Egypt and I played monopoly before Joe joined us halfway since he took a long time in the bathroom.

And all the time Egypt kept losing since he kept spending the money.

We didn't even realize it was already night time and dinner was served in the cafeteria.

I ate a lot during lunch so I stayed behind and slept.

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4 : 30 am.

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"Mhhnn..." I groaned as I blinked a few times since the room was dark.

What time is it?

I look over to Egypt who's sleeping on his bed and Nepal who's still reading.

"Nepal?" I gently called.

He looks over to me and tilts his head.

"What time is it?" I asked still a bit sleepy.

He sticks out two of his fingers and signed: *dawn.*

Oh, he can do sign language too.

"I see, thank you" I replied and cleared my throat a little.

I'm thirsty.

I got up and went to my bag that's besides me and take out my bottle that I mixed with lime.

I look over to Nepal and hands him the bottle.

The distance wasn't even that far either, even with my short hands, he can still grab and reach it.

"Want one?" I asked.

He nodded and gently took it from me and took a sip. His eyes sparkled a little and he licked his lips.

"Tasty right?" I smiled.

He nodded in response.

"You can have it, it's good for people who stay up late too" I said and laid back down on my bed while facing him.

"Good...night" I mumbled as my eyes starts to get heavier once more...

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I gasped as I emerge from the water.

I swam to the land I first laid my eyes on and coughed.

Where am I?

I look around and I'm in some sort of forest, there was a river in the middle and a waterfall too...

It looks so familiar.

I flinched when a woman suddenly came running from behind the waterfalls.

Her clothes were loosely hanging from her body and she was sweating hard too.

Who is she? I couldn't see her face but I know who she is...

"No..."

I jumped a little when somebody popped behind me.

My eyes grew wide.

She was wearing a clothes that I'm very familiar with, yet her face was covered in a black veil.

Veil?...

He sobbed and covered her mouth as if what she saw was shocking.

Who...

"It can't be true!" She yelled and she falls to the ground, clutching on to her chest.

She looked sad.

I crouched down to her level infront of her but my presence wasn't even noticed

"She couldn't have..." She mumbled again.

I tried placing my hand on her shoulder and she flinched before looking up.

She wasn't looking at me, she was looking through me.

She stood up and walked one step closer.

I turn around and saw someone else coming out from behind the waterfalls.

But I couldn't get a proper view who it was but their clothes was also in disarray and carrying their cloak.

Their heads were looking down as they walk in a slow pace.

"That's..."

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I jolted wide awake from the sudden sound of alarm.

"Ugh, who's making that noise???" Joe groans below me, so did Egypt and Nepal.

I guess we finally arrived.

"Nnm..." I blinked a few times as I adjusted my eyes from the sudden light that turned itself on.

Someone must be operating the lights and the alarm.

I know I dreamt something again but...

"Can't remember..." I mumbled and yawned.

We all got off and carried our bags with us.

There were already people at the island and lots of tents were placed now as well.

Of course one tent is per group.

Not only that, we were placed near the beach and we can hear, smell and feel the wind of the summer.

"Wooooooo!!!!!! Look at the ocean! So blue! So vast!!!" Joe exclaimed, now full of energy than he was when we got off.

Egypt was still half asleep and Nepal is... As usual, stoic and expressionless.

The teachers told us to change into the clothes they provided and we'll start the camp in a while.

It was a grayish t-shirt, and a short that's longer than what I had, about just right the knee.

Thank goodness.

Somehow, this feels like when I joined the girls scout in my school before.

They made us eat breakfast first and we all ate in this wooden outdoor table and chair that you usually see in backyard gardens.

They were placed besides each other like how my country would eat in a boodle fight.

Minus the banana leaves and mixed food that we'll eat with our bare hands.

After breakfast, they gave us a 5 minute rest and a time to fully wake up and exercise a bit.

"What do you think would we do first?" Joe asked while stretching his legs.

"Probably to hunt rabbits" Egypt replied while bathing in the sun for a *blessing* he said.

"It is a summer camp so that's possible" Joe said.

Just then, Tito shook a bell and it gathered everyone's attention to him.

"Everyone, I want you all to get ready, cause tonight we'll teach you how to survive, how to hunt, how to stay alive in the wild!" He yelled.

"Furthermore, we'll help you be tough as a metal, strong as the storm and cunning as a snake!"

"But first-" he gestures his hand and a group of men came out with a bunch of pouches with them before distributing it one by one to us.

"Your survival tools, if you ask me these shits won't even help you

at all! I'd rather you all start with nothing! Cause when you get stranded in an island, there's no way there's a fucking bag for survival shit is there ready for you!"

Whoah, I can see veins popping from his neck.

"Anyways" he softly said and cleared his throat.

"First tools: pocket knife! They are good for everything! They're good for repairing, making, killing and hunting!"

"Did he say, killing?" Joe whispered besides me.

"Next! Purification tablets: you place this shit in your water bottle or anything that's suitable to drink from on the water and it's good to be drank, I don't even know why they made this cause in my time we can track and locate a place where we can drink"

"That's the purpose of the purification tablets, to clean the water you need to drink instead of looking around for water" Egypt grumbled.

"Fire starting kits: and by the name you can tell how it's use!"

Tito explained even more on what was inside the pouches.

But when brother martial taught me how to survive, he never gave me anything like this, he just taught me immediately on what was the most crucial ones and left me on an island all by myself with nothing.

"alright! Now that I've explained it, let's start this shit"

First, he taught us how to make fire.

I already knew how so I went ahead and made ours in mere seconds.

This fire starting kits is really handy, I didn't even know such a thing was made- and I was left alone to make my own with woods and dead rocks.

But as expected, the others were having a hard time.

Malaysia and Indonesia almost spent their entire match box and all they could make was smoke.

The others were resourceful enough to make one even if it's wrong but, they still managed.

Russia and Kazakhstan poured the oil of their lighter on the wood and it immediately ignited, luckily it didn't spread because of the oil that splashed all over the place.

"So this is how you make fire... Fascinating" Egypt awed as he stared at the fire.

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The next one was making traps with twigs and veins.

I used to make these traps to hunt chickens before, so it was fairly easy.

"Ahhh!!!" J screamed when his ankle was caught in the trap they made and it hanged him upside-down "damn it!!! Spain! Why didn't you tell me it was placed there?!"

"I thought it was a prey"

I giggled at the sight.

Looking around again, I saw China make a graves bait stick snare, it awed me since I've never seen China make a trap or even know he actually has knowledge how to make one.

Ahh, but it's China. He placed first in school so maybe this should be nothing for him.

Suddenly, there was a loud poof sound and we turn our direction to it.

It was Arabia and Mexico all covered in white powder.

They must've made a bomb instead of a trap. And of course, Tito scolded them.

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Third lesson was how to track water.

There are different ways to track clean water and islands always has streams or ponds inside them.

But of course this isn't new for me anymore.

"It's wet..." I mumbled as I examine the green moss on the bottom of the tree, it's a sign that a stream or water is nearby.

"Woahhhh!!!!!" Joe exclaimed when we arrived to a pond, it's almost alike at the school but it's bigger and clear and clean.

"Not bad" Egypt said behind me.

"Aaaaaaaaa a a a a aaaaaaaaaaa!!!!"

Someone yelled and jumped from a nearby tree and splashing in the pond, creating a huge water wave splash that rained on us.

"Woooohoooo!!! South! You're the dude!" Joe exclaimed and jumped in as well.

"How'd you like my Tarzan yell?"

Suddenly, north was besides me; huffing and wheezing, crouched down a little as he catch for his breath.

"South you asshole..." he wheezed and glared at the two in the pond.

"Are you okay north?"

North shake his head and stood up straight "I'm fine" he reasured

and pats my head.

Soon after, Tito caught south and Joe and scolded them.

As noon came, we stopped to take a break and they served us lunch.

"Ugh, what's the big deal? We just swam in the pond" Joe irritatingly said while devouring his lunch.

"That's because it was still time for a lesson you mongrel" Egypt scolds and smacks his head "and eat with manners!"

"Hey Joe!" J calls and sat besides him, leaning close to whisper something while looking around cautiously.

"There's a cave I saw earlier, wanna venture in there later tonight?" He winked at Joe who immediately got the message.

Joe perked up and nodded with a mischievous grin "hell yeah"

I tilt my head to the side "a cave?" I asked.

J nodded in reply "while me and Spain were looking around for any spring water, we found this small river with a waterfall, and behind it was a cave"

A cave.

Suddenly, the word cave gives me a feeling of familiarity. Like I've seen one not long ago...?

"Wanna come with us philipia? This sort of thing is famous in my country, we call it the test of courage" he grins.

Joe scoffs and took a huge bite of his corn "in my country we call it white brain"

We turn to Joe "white brain?" Egypt asked.

Joe shakes his head "nevermind, anyways you guys in?"

Me, Egypt and Nepal glance at each other and nodded.

"Sure"

"Alright! Later at 11 pm, we'll meet you guys at the pond philipia found earlier- by the way, I think it's fate that philipia was the first to find that pond"

"Why?" I asked.

J stood up when Spain called for him "that pond is actually named *pearl*" he answered before going back to Spain.

"Oh, I know why" Egypt spoke and gracefully ate his lunch "because it was once a pond filled with rich pearls, until everything disappeared one day"

"How did it disappear?"

He shrugged "no one knows, since then, the pond has been the same as it were when the pearls disappeared"

Such a sad story, we humans have done nothing but steal from nature while the nature still kept giving and giving...

I sigh and continued eating my lunch.

A pond full of pearls...

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11 : 20 pm

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We waited for everyone to sleep first before sneaking out of our tent with a flashlight and jackets.

Like we agreed, we went to the pond that Joe and south swam earlier.

As we got near, J, Spain, Greece, and Brazil were already there.

"Philipia, over here!" J called and we waved back.

"Such a lovely night it is" Egypt spoke and took a deep breath and exhaled loudly "fascinating"

"Look philipia" Spain said and pointed the water where the moon was making it look like it was shining with colorful colors.

"It would've looked prettier if the pearls were still here" Brazil added and lightly splash us some water.

"Hey! You're gonna get my clothes wet" Greece bantered.

Brazil stared at him blankly and still splashed some water on him.

"Hey!"

"Come on now guys" We followed J and Spain towards the direction where the waterfall was.

When we arrived, it was a small waterfall with crystal clear waters and because of it, with the light of the moon, we can see through the water and the cave was visible.

"There it is!" He points and hurriedly went to it.

For some reason.

This scene reminds me of somewhere...

Somewhere really far yet near.

It's making me nauseous when I think about it.

"You guys have your flashlights?" He asked and everyone showed them theirs.

"Alright, first rule is to see who's group that can last long" he said and flashes the light under his chin.

"Yeah, whatever dude" Joe berates and proceeds to go in.

Egypt was trembling though, is he cold?

"Who's group who can last more than 5 minutes, wins!" He added and his voice echoed inside the cave.

We got deeper and all we could ever find was rocks and some bats.

"If China was here he'd definitely eat those" Joe joked which Egypt slaps his arm.

"Not funny"

"Relax~ it was just a joke...uhhh, hey, you okay?"

We turn to Egypt who's face has gone pale.

"I'm f-fine..."

"No you don't, you look like you're about to pass out" Joe worriedly said and flashes the light at him.

"Egypt hates the dark"

"Mongrel Nepal! Don't you dare say tha--"

Suddenly, we heard someone laugh.

"W-wh-what was that?!?!?!?" Egypt immediately hid behind Joe while Joe flashed the light towards the direction where the laughter was.

It didn't sound scary, it sound odd.

"H-hey! Don't hold so tight! You're gonna wrinkle my shirt"

"Hiiiii!!!! I t-think I see something!!!"

"Egypt what the hell!"

"Egypt, calm down, I'm sure it was noth--"

"HEHEHHEHEHEHE!!!!!!!"

An ear piercing laughter erupted the place which scared Egypt.

"AHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" He screamed and grabbed Joe.

"Wha-- heyyyy!!!!!!"

The cave shook slightly causing a few rocks to fall on us.

But I fell back and failed to follow Joe and Egypt.

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"Hey..."

I look up and saw Nepal on top of me with a few rocks on his back.

"N-nepal! Are you okay?" I panicked and quickly got up.

"It's dark" he said.

I look around and saw both our flashlights had break from the fall.

"Oh dear" I mumbled.

"It's dark..." He said again and leaned on my chest.

Is Nepal scared of dark?

But our flashlights are broken, this situation is too coincidental.

Broken flashlights, alone with Nepal in a dark cave.

I sigh and hugged him back, comforting him.

I look around and think for a minute "hmmm... Then..."

I closed my eyes and inhaled before showing all my marks.

It glowed and it gave us a little bit of light in the place.

"Let there be light~ hehehe... It's okay now"" I said and lift his head.

Nepal looks at me still with a stoic look but slightly furrowed eyebrows.

"Oh..." He simply said and took a step back away from me "sorry..."

Nepal must be uncomfortable being close to someone.

I stood up and dusted my shorts "you're head, is it okay?" I asked not taking a step closer and just let the glow from my marks light the area.

He shook his head "it's fine..."

I sighed in relief.

I look around once again and walked towards the direction where we heard that laughter.

"Silly J" I mumbled and picked up a broken speaker "I knew that laughter sounded dubious"

Nepal walks behind me and examined the broken speaker on my hand "is this a prank of his?"

I nodded "I guess, but let's get out first, I think Egypt bumped into something that made the place shake a little"

I picked up our broken flashlights that no longer has a bulb before continued walking back to where the entrance is.

I glanced over to Nepal who's walking a little bit frightened. It doesn't showed on his face but I can tell.

I think he doesn't like it when someone touches him when he's afraid, so I guess this should do.

"Nepal, can you take out your hand?" I asked and he obediently gave it to me.

I didn't even notice he's wearing a long sleeved shirt.

Isn't he hot?

I wrapped the handkerchief around it and held the other end "this way, you don't have to be so far from me" I smiled.

"Thank you..." He mumbled; looking down.

We walked again until we can see the entrance where the others are.

"Philipia! Thank goodness!" Spain saw me first and hurriedly went to me.

Showing my marks means my senses are sharper and on the highest point than average, so I immediately hid them when we got closer.

"Hello Spain" I greeted and he gave me a hug.

"I knew what J planned was dangerous!" He said and turn to J.

"H-hey! I didn't expect the rocks to fall!"

"Are you okay? No scratches? Wounds? Infections?" Greece worriedly asked as he examines me from head to toe and front to back...

"We were so surprised when the place started shaking, we had to leave immediately, that's when we saw Egypt unconscious and Joe huffing heavily" Brazil explained.

I look over to Egypt who's unconscious on the ground, face still pale.

"More importantly, Nepal is wounded" I said.

"Fucking Egypt, ugh..." Joe breaths out.

"Let's hurry back first and ask for a first aid"

I nodded and glance over to Nepal who's still the same.

Looking unfazed.

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"You..."

We all flinched when a low and angry tone of voice spoke behind us.

"W-wassup prof" Joe nervously greeted.

I can't afford to be scolded, Nepal needs medical attention "u-uhm Tito! I'm sorry we went out without your permission, but Nepal is hurt" I said.

Tito looks at me and sighed "I'm very angry you students went to the cave, there's literally nothing in there anymore but... Fine, the medic is over there" he points and I nodded.

I had help with a few people to carry Egypt while Tito insisted the others to stay to be scolded- especially J.

I flop down on my bed in my tent after they treated Egypt and Nepal.

"Philipia" he called and I turn to him "Thank you..."

I smiled and nodded "no problem"

"I really dislike the dark yet I also dislike being in close contact to others... Thank you for your understanding"

Even if Nepal shows no expression at all, his actions are the ones that shows it instead.

And I can't help but see it as a beautiful way of getting your words through someone.

"Let's sleep, we still have a long day"

"Goodnight" he said before going back to his sleeping bag.

It taken me aback but I smiled at myself and whispered "goodnight..."

I wonder how the scolding is now? I sure hope Tito doesn't go overboard.

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The next day was where the real camping began.

First was to hunt 5 wild rabbits within 1 hour.

Vietnam's group was the first to finish, second was China's and third was Brazil's.

We came out a bit late since Egypt refuses to break the neck of the rabbit and drain it's blood.

Second activity was to chase pigs in the mud, Tito refused to have me participate so it was Joe or Nepal who did.

We came out defeated.

Third activity is where we race to whomever get to start a fire first; luckily, we came out first this time.

Though I burned my hand a little though since it was a race.

But it was okay it immediately healed.

Fourth activity is too cook rice in a bamboo and to skin the rabbits we hunted, we washed it, seasoned it wrapped it in a foil and leaves and covered it with mud before burying it and starting a fire on it.

There was a lot of smoke that our eyes became really watery but all the food came out great.

We did so much more that everyone was so exhausted yet enjoying at the same time.

We didn't even realize how dirty we were all now. There were leaves stuck on us and even dried mud from earlier.

And since the activities for today was over they all swam in the ocean and cleaned themselves there.

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9 : 35 pm

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Night came and we made a bonfire while everyone relaxes and ate their food.

"What will we do next tomorrow?" Joe asked and stabbed a marshmallow and leaned it close to the fire we made for ourselves.

"Hiking" Tito replied behind us who's munching a leg.

"You just pop out of nowhere like a damn mushroom" Joe bantered.

Tito then crouched down besides him and placed his hand on Joe's head "after hiking, will be sailing- we're gonna teach you how to survive in the sea and teach some of you how to swim, after that is fishing and diving, and lastly is studying all kinds of plants and what to eat and what not to eat and then, that's it"

Joe groans "great, more to go, then our 11 weeks of summer vacation will be reduced to-"

"5 weeks"

They all gasped, except Nepal.

"Unbelievable" Egypt replied and held his head "truly, unbelievable"

Tito rolled his eyes and gave me one piece of leg "well, 11 weeks of vacation seemed a bit excessive for Mr. Pangaea, so Tethys had to come up with this summer camp idea"

Joe shakes his head and carefully ate his mushroom "Tethys huh, that guy just does whatever he wants and his pops just agree to everything"

Tito laughed "well, he's the only son and the only dominant heir"

"Sucks for him and sucks for us, he's gonna be our boss and we're gonna be his subordinates"

Egypt sighs "I can't believe he's gonna be so much higher than me soon, right Nepal?"

Nepal nodded (as always)

"This guy just don't talk much" Tito stares at Nepal and Nepal stares at Tito.

The two had some sort of staring contest, both looking at each other with a bored expression.

"Anyways!" Tito suddenly smiled and bit a huge chunk of the meat before giving one piece to me "eat up, cause tomorrow is where all the real fun begins"

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What Tito said was right, it truly was fun.

And the first one was:

Hiking.

We climbed a mountain for 3 hours

And there, they taught us how to navigate our surroundings, to know where east, west, north and south is, with the nature.

To know if a storm is coming, to know how to hide your presence or if you ever get in any danger from enemies or predators.

But the most fun part was when we rode a Zipline to go down, that 3 hour hike was a mere 5 minute ride down.

But it was still enjoyable.

Except Finland who almost passed out from his fear of heights, glad that Estonia was eager enough to experience it and practically pushed Finland to ride down.

Though he screamed on the top of his lungs.

Sailing.

The next day was sailing, we weren't far yet we weren't near the shore either.

It was pretty basic yet scary since Tito scared the students that there is a shark nearby.

Though sharks don't like to be near the shore so it was only me and China who probably knew that there wasn't really one.

While sailing, they taught us how to dive and swim and harvest corals on the very bottom or even hunt fishes while we're at it.

They even taught us how to expand our lungs more to breath even longer underwater.

Though, cosmos didn't participate since he can't remove his helmet and his helmet isn't allowed to dive underwater and he can't breath the air on (since that's what most people thought)

It's water proof but it's not a scuba diving helmet either.

But I got to know that Vietnam and Iran were skilled swimmers while Scotland and Ireland are great divers, they were the longest

one to last under water aside from Arabia, Canada and France.

Though Ukraine, Mexico and the others were simply doing a float.

Of course, Tito scolded them.

The last one was:

Determine the difference.

It was to study all different kinds of plants around vaalbara since vaalbara has 50% of the world's vegetation.

They were lots of poisonous and non edible plants in the area so they taught us the difference and even taught us their benefits.

"This is atropa belladonna" Mexico said to me as he gave me a flower with a stem that still has a berry on it.

"Or deadly nightshade" I said and took it from his hand, placing it on my small notebook and wrote it's name.

"It is a deadly yet beautiful plant don't you think amor?"

I smiled and nodded "it truly is, deadly"

"I remember a story that has a scene where one of the main character dies from an unknown poison yet was revived" Egypt wondered and picked up a leaf.

"You talking about Jesus?" Israel came up behind him with a basket of different set of plants "hey angel" he greeted and grins.

"Hello, are you guys done with the hunt in the area?" I asked.

"Yeah, the last one to scout is the west area, after that were done" he explains.

"Good luck" I smiled and returned to what I was doing.

"Don't eat that berry okay?" He warned as they both leave.

I nodded in response and took the flower from the plant and threw

the berry away.

"So it was a story about a man named Jesus?"

I look over to Egypt who's still thinking about the story he heard.

"Well, I guess? But I know something that's similar"

"What is it?"

"Romeo and Juliet" I answered.

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Joe stretches his back and lays down on his bed "these past few days have been tiring, I couldn't even wear any of my summer outfits" he groans.

"Exactly my notion" Egypt said in return who's depressed on his bed.

I look over to Nepal who's still the same whenever the day ends- reading his book.

When suddenly; Tito came up behind us with a loud laughter "lighten up!" He said and wraps an arm around Joe and Egypt.

"Hey professor, this is our tent" Joe stated.

Tito laughed and showed him a bottle of liquor and wiggled his eyebrows and said "care to drink? We have two days free time before going home!"

Joe immediately beamed and so did Egypt.

Although Tito strictly prohibited me to even take a sip since it's lambanog.

I never thought he'd bring 5 bottles of though.

Me and Nepal stayed in our tent while the rest of the people outside drank, even the female teachers didn't hesitate to participate.

And after about 2 hours, they came from noisy to a bit quiet.

"Philipia~~" China called and crawled inside our tent.

He reeked in alcohol and he had some sort of crown made out of chicken bones on his head.

"C-china?"

"Philipia~! I love you sooooooooo much ~~!!!" He squealed and hugged my waist, nuzzling his face on it.

I giggled and pats his head after removing the crown bone "my, my, you drank quite a lot today China"

"Yeah, I drank a lot~ lots and lots and lotssss!!!" He replied and an empty bottle rolled from his hand.

Me and nepal glance at each other and helped me picked up the sleeping China.

"Oh my... What has happened here?"

The place was now a sea of drunken unconscious people, although Russia and Scotland were still drinking.

"Sunshine, what's up?" He called, face a bit flushed.

"It's China, I think he passed out" I said.

"Shit, I didn't even see him slip past us" he stood up and took China instead and basically, threw him in his tent.

"There! Now the ching chong is sleeping" he said and sat back down to take a shot with Scotland.

I look over to him and he's building a pyramid with cards.

Looks like everyone had too much fun.

Vietnam and J were leaning against each other while J was hugging the head of Iran who's hugging a bottle.

Spain was bent over the table and drooling a little bit while south was sleeping on the ground holding a marker and north was besides him, his face was full of drawings and Korean languages.

Sweden, Poland, Ukraine and France were sleeping outside their tent inside their sleeping bags with a house made out of empty bottles.

How did they even do that?

"Oh! Philipiaaaa!" Ireland calls who's stumbling a little.

"Hello Ireland, you look, drunk"

He scoffs and spoke in a very deep Irish accent "tis' noe drun'k sham! Wa Moe bott'le..."

I couldn't really understand but Russia stood up and grabbed him by the collar "there's no more bottle!" He said through gritted teeth.

Ireland gasped and slowly teared up "n-noooo!!!!!"

They both suddenly fell on the ground and started sobbing and whimpering.

I've never seen them like this, did they really drank too much?

"I did it..." Scotland spoke and showed me his pyramid made out of cards.

I clapped my hands and Scotland slowly dropped his head on the table and snored.

"I expected that..." I mumbled.

"I think Egypt and America is at the beach" Nepal said and suggested we go and look over there.

We walked around the sand and saw a couple of students laying down there and sleeping with bottles of liquor too.

Is this really allowed in a school? Oh well, they are adults now so it wouldn't be a problem.

And we're not in school anyways so I guess it's allowed.

"There he is"

I followed Nepal towards the beach and saw Egypt sleeping there with a seal laying besides him, and him petting it.

"Egypt?" I called.

He opened his eyes and smiled "ahhh, anuket, you're here, look- I made a friend"

"We can see that, what's her name?"I crouched down.

"It's a he" he stated.

I blinked a few times and said "you checked?"

Egypt started groping his hand on the seal and nodded "yes"

I laughed by how adorable he is.

"Well, what's his name?"

"His name is dolphin... dolphin the seal"

I laughed again and nodded "nice to meet you, dolphin"

"Say goodbye to your friend now" Nepal said yet Egypt whined in return.

"No! He is a friend! And friends stick together!"

Egypt was somehow stubborn and hard to convince and the seal somehow took a liking to him.

And while we were helping Egypt, Joe suddenly came up behind

me and hugged me "philipia!!"

"Joe?"

I turn to look at him but quickly look away again "you're...naked" I mumbled.

"I went skinny dipping, wanna joinnn?"

I chuckled and shake my head "no thank you"

He pouts and took my hand, tugging it.

I was looking away, looking at the sky "why not??? It's summer! And there's a beach!"

"No, really, Joe you're quite drunk now so where's your uhm... Shorts?"

Joe paused and thinks for a minute "uhh... Gone, lost at the ocean"

Oh dear me...

"Come on now philipia, I'll take your clothes off for you!~" he eagerly said and started pulling my shirt off.

"Ah! Wait! J-joe"

Nepal saw what was happening and was about to intervene.

"Stop right there, United States of America!!!!" NZ exclaimed and pulled Joe away from me and threw him to Australia who's chasing behind him.

"Ah! Hey! What the hell? Why's he naked?" Australia asked before covering Joe with his jacket.

"You okay philipia?!" He asked.

I pulled my shirt up again that's showing my whole shoulder and the strap of my bra.

"I'm o-okay, but is Joe..."

I did ask but I was still looking at the sky.

"He's fine, don't worry about him anymore we'll take him to our tent"

"Is that a monk seal?" Australia asked again and we looked over to Egypt who's still hugging the seal (dolphin) while Nepal is pulling him away.

I smiled and replied "y-yes"

Australia laughed and shake his head "damn, I didn't know vaalbara has one" he said and wraps one arm of Joe around his neck and held his waist.

"You guys didn't drink?" I asked.

He shake his head "we just ate the food, plus, I'm not in the mood for a drink"

"Okay, thank you again NZ and Australia" I said and they both carried Joe back to their tent.

"Be careful mate!" Australia waved and I wave back.

I glance over to Nepal who's now carrying Egypt.

"Let's go back" I said.

He nodded in reply.

He wrapped Egypt's arm around his neck and I did the same to the other- but in the corner of my eyes, though it was only just for a split second; I saw Nepal's wrist had a deep cut on it.

No wonder he chose to wear a long sleeved shirt even with this summer heat.

Is Nepal... Hurting himself?

Should I ask him what's wrong?

Ah but, it's better to wait until he's ready, it's not good to force

someone.

I'll just keep an eye on him...

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7 : 30 am

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The next day, we had nothing to do so the rest of my friends woke up with a bad hangover and headaches.

Even the teachers were having migraines as well.

Especially Tito.

He was on his bed the whole day and didn't even budge from his position.

"Are you okay now Egypt?" I asked and he shake his head before I placed a cold towel on his forehead and eyes.

"The pharaoh, is having a headache" he groans and bury his face on my pillow that he borrowed.

I giggled and pat his head.

He'll be sleeping the whole day I guess I should head out and get some fresh air.

"I'll be out for a while Nepal" I said and he replied with a nod.

I stretch my arms backwards and decided to walk to the beach.

Usually they'll be out here playing but since half of the students are on bed experiencing hangovers, the beach was quite empty and quiet.

"Philipia"

I look back and there was australia, canada and cosmos.

"Good morning" I greeted.

"Morning maple syrup! How was your sleep?" Canada nuzzles his face on my shoulder.

I giggled and replied "it was okay, although I didn't expect everyone to be down"

He laughed "it was so funny, especially Mexico!"

"He ate that one bowl of large chili right?" Australia recalls in awe.

"yeah! It was crazy! I would've died if I were him!"

I look over to cosmos who's gaze was on the beach, staring at it with a melancholic feeling from him.

"Have you ever tried swimming?" I asked.

Cosmos shake his head "I can't, my helmet might break"

I smiled "well, you don't have to swim if you want to experience the ocean" I said and removed my sandals and carried them.

"Wanna try?" I held out my hand.

I can feel cosmos stare at me and hesitantly accept my offer.

We walked towards the water and stop just about under the knee level "how is it?" I asked.

Cosmos looked down at his reflection and I felt his hand hold me tighter since the current of the water was a bit strong.

Is he scared?

"Ah! Unfair!" Canada exclaimed and ran up to us "I wanna join too!"he yelled and started running towards us.

"Canada be careful! You might push cos--"

"Ah...!"

Canada suddenly lost his blamace due to the current of the shore and pushed cosmos who was in a trance while staring at the clear water.

They both fell and cosmos always pushed much deeper.

"Oh no!" Canada immediately stood up and I helped him but it was a little had since there was water and the current was strong.

Cosmos stayed there, and let his body float, his head still under water and it his hand still holding on to mine.

"Ahhhh!!!! Cosmos! I'm sorry!!"

Canada panicked and immediately pulled cosmos out of the water and back at the shore.

"Should I do CPR?!" Canada exclaimed and australia looked at him with a puzzled expression.

"How can you give someone a CPR with a helmet on?!"

"Ahhh! I dunno!"

"I didn't drown idiot" cosmos spoke and slowly sat up.

"I thought I did something!" Canada stomps his feet.

Cosmos didn't reply and just stayed there still looking at the sea "the water was just so clear and it felt so peaceful..." He muttered but enough for us to hear.

Australia sighs "well, I guess you got to experience something then"

We all turn our heads back at the camp and a different teacher rang the bell to gather all of us.

"I thought it's a free day today?" Canada mumbled.

"Apparently not" Australia added and helped cosmos stand "come on bud"

I followed behind them and noticed cosmos still glued to the sea.

Did something happen when Canada accidentally pushed him down?

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7 : 30 pm

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Night came again and there was another drinking party.

Apparently the medicine they handed out to them was super effective that their headaches went away almost instantly.

Of course, Tito was able to convince some students to drink again.

I guess he really has a way with his words that he can make anyone say *yes* to his invitation.

Reminds me of brother Greg.

Is it a Filipino perk?

"Another drinking, haven't they learned their lesson?" Nepal spoke besides me who's reading a book.

"Next week is going to be the summer vacation, I guess they wanted to spend a day where they can do anything" I said and watched them chug bottle after bottle, taking shot after shot just at the opening of our tent.

"What about you, Nepal?" I asked and looked over his way "aren't you going to drink?"

He shake his head "I'm not a fond of... drinking"

"Bullllllshhittttttt!!!"

I jumped a little when Russia's head popped inside the tent "you, buddy, drink!"

"No, I don't dri--"

Suddenly, he pulled Nepal out of the tent and dragged him somewhere in the crowd.

"Good luck, Nepal" I mumbled and waved.

Now it's just me in this tent.

"Summer vacation..."I muttered to myself and hugged my knees "what report should I give brother?"

Weird; before, I wanted to go home immediately, I wanted to finish my mission immediately.

But now...

I don't feel like going home.

I don't even want to go home...

"How weird..."

Suddenly a shadow looms over me.

"Aren't you, philipia?"

I look up to where a man with a mysterious aura around him asked while holding a plate of barbeque.

I'm going to guess this is Laos...

"Ah, yes, I am" I replied.

He offers a handshake and said "I'm Laos, I'm also part of the ASEAN"

I perked up.

So he's also a part of it.

"Nice to meet you" I smiled and accepted his handshake, but then, he held my hand and turn it over to my palm.

"Such beautiful palm, rough yet smooth, hardworking yet still soft" he said and leaned it close to his lips "your future is unclear too, it's jumbled up like your thoughts"

How did he know?

He grins and released my hand "if you want me to give you a reading, just ask Iran where to find me" he added and kissed two of his fingers before pressing it to my lips.

"Bye~ " he waved over his shoulder and not looking at my way as he leave.

So he's a fortune teller? Does that mean he can read tarot cards?

I've always thought those types of people were interesting, and he got me interested.

When we go back, I'll ask him for a read.

"Yeahhhhhh!!!! Go amigo!!!" Joe yelled.

I look to my right where the loud cheering was.

It was Spain and Mexico having a drinking competition.

Thank goodness Mexico is drunk, or else he would be frozen in his position since he's facing Spain.

"Oh my goodness, that's a lot of bottles..." I said to myself.

Since the party isn't gonna stop soon, I decided to go back inside the tent.

I sigh and closed the zipper and flop down to my bed.

Tomorrow is the last day now...

And after 1 week we'll go home, then after 5 weeks back again.

Should I lie again and make up something? Or should I just tell the truth to brother that I haven't gotten any information?

But if I did he would not let me go back...

I am a spy so I must blend in with the crowd and in the school and I got caught up with the activities and everything... So I couldn't get any information...

That's should be enough right?

I sighed even more.

"Now that sounds like I'm just making excuses"

I pulled the covers close to me.

Let's just sleep and think about this tomorrow instead...

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I jolted when a suddenly woke up from the sound of a bottle breaking.

I fish out my phone from my bag that's besides me and checked the time.

3 : 13 am

It's dawn. They're not done yet?

I got up from my position and saw Egypt and Joe already on their bed still reeking of alcohol.

I sigh and fixed their bed position and tuck them in with their blankets.

I look around again and noticed that Nepal isn't here...

"Is he still outside?" I asked myself and crawled out of the tent.

I shiver a little from the cold of the dawn.

Even if it's summer, it's still cold at dawn.

I yawned and looked around and everyone seems to be inside their tent now, though there are trash and bottles and things all over the place.

I wore my sandals and took my jacket.

"Where's Nepal..."

I walked around the area and take out my flashlight since it's still fairly dark.

I squinted my eyes a little if the person from afar who is sleeping on top of the table is Nepal or not.

I was about to approach them but another glass breaking not far from me- caught my attention.

I followed the sound and saw a shattered bottle that's near the entrance inside the island.

It's still dark so it may be hard to travel inside the island.

Someone must be so drunk that they might hurt themselves, what if they ate something that shouldn't be eaten? Or maybe do something reckless?

I bite my lower lip and glanced back at the camp.

Should I wake someone? Or should I just go by myself?

"I should ask someone for help"

I was about to go and ask when I heard another glass break.

"That didn't sound good..."

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I was raised to be obedient.

Never disobey.

Always answer with a yes if given an order.

Always lay your head low.

That was what my father taught me.

He was strict, he was a hard working man, yet he wasn't a father material...

At least not to me.

He was different to me than to my sister who is a city.

I didn't feel envious, I didn't yearn for his affection.

I just wanted to feel unshackled even if it's just for a while.

And I thought that time will never happen.

Until I was given an invitation to attend pangaea.

My father was obedient to the continent's leader's orders, so he didn't hesitate to send me to this school.

And I thought it would be those strict and formal academies...

But it wasn't.

Not everyone followed the rules yet they didn't break anything either.

They were allowed to do what they want as long as they can properly pass their grades and graduate to make their land, their cities, their countries prosper.

I've experienced things I've never experienced before.

I've done things I've never done things before.

And I met people who are similar to me who I haven't met before.

In this school, I was free, in this school I can do what I want yet...

My every action had to be written and reported.

It irritated me, it made me choke from how I'm still bound by his orders.

And that irritation, made me want to break amd hurt someone.

But I know I can't do that.

So I hurt myself instead, though it's not like I want to die, it's just to ease up the irritating feeling.

I know my father sent someone to watch over me here and report to him what I do.

How cruel is this.

I just want to be free.

But I'm sure, after this summer camp, and when we all go home...

I'm sure I'm going to receive a lot of punishment or maybe, stop me from going since I broke a lot of his rules.

After all, for the first time.

I disobeyed his order not to attend or participate in this summer camp.

But I just wanted to try...

I yearned to experience these things too...

And it was fun, it was all fun...

Even in that traumatizing, cramped, and enclosed cave that's darker than the punishment room.

It was still fun...

"Let there be light~ hehehe... It's okay now"

It was really fun.

"Nepal, aren't you going to drink?"

And it was really beautiful...

"*Can you take out your hand*?"

But I just don't want to be locked in that dark room anymore, it's hard to breath.

I stop and look at the scene before me.

I didn't even realize I climbed up the mountain where I saw a cliff halfway when we were hiking...

I guess being drunk is really useful in keeping your mind at bay.

I chugged the last bottle I'm holding before throwing it on the ground and it shattered.

That really felt so good.

Breaking things and releasing all your frustrations from it.

Is really effective.

Thanks Japan, for that tip.

"Haaaa.... So sleepy..."

I took one step and it seems like I'm gonna fall down.

But what does it matter?

At least I'm really free now...

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"Father, I can't answer this..." I mumbled while looking down but he slapped my face.

"You're so useless! I was never like that! To think your the leader and not your brilliant little sister, it's shameful to even call you my son!" He exclaimed and slammed the ruler on the table.

He walks out of the room and take out his keys.

And I already know what he was about to do "father please don't lock me in! It's scary!"

"If you don't answer that within 1 hour! I will put you in the punishment room instead!" He yelled and slammed the door close.

I can hear keys jiggling and the lock.

I sniffled and immediately sat back down on my seat and tried again.

And again.

And again.

But it's been 5 hours and I've checked it again and again and I made sure, there was no errors.

But I think, father forgot I was even here and he's in her room, probably playing with her and mother.

I bite my lower lip and sobbed quietly.

I wanna leave this house...

They didn't even remember me while eating supper.

If they wanted me gone they could just kill me here, right now...

I took my pen and removed the lid, placing it to my stomach, ready to put a hole and hopefully bleed to death...

"I'll just kill myself here...!" I whimpered.

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"Ngh...."

Huh? I'm still... Alive?

It's a bit bright out now... Did I fall and survive?

No. I did not, I'm hanging by the cliff ... I'm flying?

Oh wait.

I slowly look up and adjusted my eyes to see a person hiding their face on the edge of the cliff while holding on to me.

"Who..."

I felt them flinch before showing me their face.

My eyes widen.

"Philipia?..."

Her eyebrows are furrowed and her lips are bleeding, she's biting on to it hard...

Why...

"G-good morning..." She said through gritted teeth "h-how was your sleep?"

What's going on?

Oh.

She's, holding on to me.

Did she grabbed me before I could even fall?

But that was when the sky was still dark and it's already a bit bright...

"What time is it?" I asked.

She groans as if she's in pain "5:45..."

She's been holding on to me for 3 hours?!

I look over to her hand that's already trembling yet still determined to hold me.

But not just that, I saw blood dripping from the side of the cliff.

"There's blood!" I exclaimed and turn to look at her.

"W-well, it's a long story but, c-can you reach it?" She said and taps the rock (cliff)

I nodded and raised my other hand towards it.

And when I grabbed a hold of it, I suddenly realized that my hand had no energy whatsoever, so it means she's carrying my full weight with one arm by a cliff with a far, and surely deadly fall beneath us.

"I'm sorry philipia..."

"Don't be!" She said and still forced a smile even through the unbearable pain "don't be sorry..."

I couldn't take the guilt in me so I had to swallow it all up and just hold on to her hand as tightly as I can.

"S-sorry if I'm holding your hand... I know you dislike it..."

How can she be so...

"Let go of my hand" I said.

She perked up and shake her head "what? No! How could I le--"

"Let go or else you'll fall with me too!" I yelled.

This must be the first time I've showed someone such expression.

I can tell she's shock but she still looked at me with a determined look.

"No!"

"Philipia, I don't want you to get hurt... Please" I pleaded yet she still shake her head.

"My body heals... This is fine" she said through greeted teeth.

How can I convince someone to let go? How can I make her let go...?

I look back at her and struggle from her grip.

"Nepal! Don't! Please!"

"I'm sorry... But I'm really thankful you tried to save me too..."

My head feels like it's going to split apart.

"But I just want to be free..."

"You are free!" She yelled and I flinched.

"You're a country leader! You're free to do what you want! Your words are the ones stronger than anyone's! Your name! Your name is the proof of it!... So please..."

Something wet dropped on to my cheek and slide down to my chin.

Is it raining?

"Please..."

Another one dropped again.

And again...

And again...

Until I realized, that it wasn't rain... But her tears.

Her mismatched eyes were somehow glimmering from her tears.

"Don't let go... I did to someone before and I couldn't make them stay..." She whimpered.

"-And I can't let that happen to you too..."

I soften my eyes at her.

Ahhh, something inside me is building up.

Something I've kept for myself for so long is...

Slowly breaking apart.

"I'm... Sorry..." I sobbed and held her hand again "I'm just scared, I'm so scared!"

"Shhh, I know, calm down... I'm here, I won't let go..."

She said that but her grip is really giving up, her hand is trembling and it's starting to get red.

I really have no choice...

I can't let her fall down as well.

And everyone is still probably asleep from being drunk...

If I fall down, there are trees that can catch me so I might still survive the fall...

It's a 50/50% chance.

"We can wait until help arrives, I'm sure there are people who will

wake up early...ghn!... They'll notice there are two missing so..." She bites her lower lip again and a fresh blood came oozing out "don't.. give up..."

I have to take that 50% chance, or else she might fall down with me...

She's one of the people who made me experience something new I've never did before, and she's become precious now.

I have to make her let go, or I'll make her let go of me by force...

"Philipia i--"

"Anuket!?"

We both flinched and she glanced over her shoulder "Egypt!" She called.

"Why in the world...?! Ugh, I'm gonna be sick again, there's blood everywhere!" He exclaimed and immediately reached down for me as well "Why are you dangling like a monkey there mongrel Nepal?!"

I reach out my other hand and he immediately grabbed it with full strength.

With his help, they were able to pull me back up and away from the edge.

And now that I'm on top again, there really was a lot of blood.

"You!" Egypt slapped my face "do you have any idea when I saw the gps tracker showing me two of you someplace in the island?!"

"Gps...?" I mumbled.

"You mean, this?" Philipia held out the necklace he also gave to her.

I then held the bracelet he also gave me.

"Of course, you're both my friends so it's natural that I would do

this so I'll know where you are in case of emergencies!" He defend.

I look back down again and saw a large shard from a shattered bottle, was buried in philipia's left knee.

"What happened? To your knee?" I asked as I hesitated to even touch it, it looked messy and blood was everywhere.

"Oh, when I saw you about to fall, I immediately sprinted to grab you but I forgot about the weight and I fell knee first on the ground.

Egypt clicked his tongue and flicked my forehead "suicide attempt? That is so childish, I'll never forgive you! And nothing comes out good from it!" He scolds and slaps me again.

"Ow..."

"And if you die! Your people will lament! You selfish mongrel!!!"

"W-wait! We should help philipia first"

I don't think I'm gonna die by falling, I think I'm going to die by Egypt choking me to death.

Even if I'm still drunk, my mind was surprisingly clear.

"You were scared, were you?" She asked as she held my cheeks.

I didn't answer but I nodded in response.

"Speak! Use your words! You have a mouth and a voice! Speak! I'm starting to think that mongrel Iran has a more powerful words than you even if he's deaf!" Egypt smacks my head again.

"No matter what happens Nepal, we're here, and you have an amazing friend too" she gestures Egypt who puff out his chest while his hands are crossed.

"Thank...you" I mumbled.

Egypt Huff's and stood up "anyways! Let's get anuket up first"

We helped philipia go back down to the camp to treat her knees.

Even if her body heals, it still better if a professional would pull it out and treat it.

After all, she can still die of blood loss.

It is a big wound so it would take time to close even with a body that heals.

When we arrived back, everyone was so shock and we had to explain everything to them.

For some reason. I'm relieved and kind of light, as if something heavy was taken from my shoulders.

I glance over to philipia who show no expression being hurt while her wound was being treated, I look down at her hand and saw bruises and redness on it.

It still hasn't healed...

Must've been because she held on to me for 3 hours.

If she were a normal person, she would've let go. But she didn't, even if she did, she will definitely fall to catch me again.

That's so reckless...

"Philipia..."

I sat besides her.

She looked at me with relief washed over her "are you hurt somewhere?" She asked.

She's the one who's hurt, her knee is a mess because of me, yet she still asked for my well being...

"I'm okay... But, philipia. I wanted to say I'm sorry..."

"Isn't there someone else you're sorry too?!" Egypt stomps his feet infront of me, hands crossed over his chest.

When the medic was done treating philipia's knee, they

immediately stood up and bowed to the three of us and left.

Egypt sat on the other side of philipia and sulks "if you have problems you can just tell me, mongrel Nepal, there's a reason why we're friends, right? Anuket?"

Philipia nodded "yes, Nepal should express himself more and let his voice be heard"

"Even if the others have scolded you, I'm still angry!"

Philipia giggled and pats his back "you have every right Egypt"

"Of course I do! To see both of my friends at a cliff and one of them is hanging by it, anyone would die from worry!"

These two...

These are the people I've never once met yet, they treat me much better than my own parents, than my own family...

"But I'm still glad Egypt was able to find u--"

Her sentence was cut off when I suddenly hugged the both of them.

"So warm... You guys are so...warm" I muttered and buried my face on their shoulders, hugging them even tighter.

Philipia hugged me back first and pats me "there, there...you can let it out, don't be scared"

"If you're embarrassed we'll cover your crying face" Egypt hugged me back too and even tighter.

I bite my lower lip and nodded.

I don't want to let go...

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It's been four days after the summer camp.

And it's been four days since that day with Nepal.

He told us his story and how and why he did what he did.

Of course, Egypt was angry and decided to help me, along with Brazil and Greece if needed to.

He couldn't thank them enough and wished I could help him as well but, knowing brother, he wouldn't want to interfere with such affair.

And in theese four days, he changed.

Though he's still stoic, but, he smiles even more now, he talks even more now, and he laughs even more now.

"Philipia"

I turn to the owner of the voice "hello Nepal" I greeted.

"Are you tending the sunflowers today?" He asked and points out the gardening tools I'm carrying.

"Oh, yes, it's part of my duty" I said.

He hummed in response and takes the tools I'm carrying "I'll help"

I couldn't say anymore, even if I refuse since he already started walking.

I sighed and just let it be.

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North wing garden.

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Like he asked, Nepal did help me and even considered joining the club with Egypt.

Ever since that summer camp and our study to different kinds of plants, Egypt had took an interest in studying more of it.

And he seems to be even more passionate about it.

"Lookie here, no wonder the Sunflowers are looking at you" Kazakhstan said as he approached us with Russia besides him.

"Hmm?"

"The Sunflowers are all looking at you, because you're shining so bright" he grins.

Russia rolled his eyes and smacks the back of his head "knock it off" he said and approached me.

"Hey sunshine" he greeted.

I smiled and replied "good afternoon, Russia"

"Wanna join us this weekend?" He asked.

I tilt my head to the side "this weekend?"

Kazakhstan then steps in "we're going to a museum, and it's all about the continent leaders and Armageddon" he beamed.

"Armageddon; that reminds me of what Egypt told me" Nepal muttered.

"I'll come, can they come too?"

He nodded "sure! The more the merrier!"

"We'll be waiting for you guys by the gate at 8 am, Kay?" Russia points out and I nodded.

Russia and Kazakhstan then went on their ways to the South wing

building whilst me and Nepal returned to the club room to return the tools.

"I wonder if Armageddon was really Egypt father's fated pair" I spoke while cleaning the hand held shovels.

"Not possible, I think you already know she doesn't travel"

"That's true but, for some reason it bothers me"

"Why?"

I held my chest "for some reason it makes me feel restless, like I'm forgetting something and it has to do with that story..."

"Hmmm, like deja Vu?"

I shake my head "no, it's, something more... It's like..."

" Lakapati !!"

"Hng...!"

I held my head when a sudden throb occured.

Again?!

Nepal crouched down to my level "is your headaches not cured yet?"

"No, it's nothing, I think it's because I forced myself" I replied.

"Let's makes sure, I'll take you to the clinic"

I was about to stand up but I suddenly felt my knees give in and my head spinning.

"Ugh..."

"Philipia! Philipi--"

No good.

His voice is fading, it's becoming blurry.

Everything is getting...

blurry...

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"Will it work?"

"It will"

"What if it won't? Then..."

"Then it won't, but I'm confident it will work"

" Haaa , I wish I have your confidence"

"But if something wrong will happen"

"I know... You'll leave it to us"

"Sorry you had to go through this, the pressure must've been unbearable"

"It was okay, I was not pressured"

"Then... Let's hope for the best"

"Don't die... Or else she'll be sad, she'll be devastated"

"I won't, I promise"

"Alright... See you then..."

"See you... I hope...."

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< < < End of chapter 10 : Ataraxia

> > > Coming Chapter 11 : Astrophile

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Fact : Greg was supposedly planned to be the villain.

Fact 2 : begonia and Lily are twin alters.

Fact 3 : Arabia is in a toxic relationship

Fact 4 : The female and male academy were once merged.

Fact 5 : 80% of the students in Pangaea are pangean people.

Fact 6 : Tethys had 5 sisters, but 3 died due to unknown reasons.

Fact 7 : Russia's mother was a prostitute.

Fact 8 : Poland, Sweden, and Scotland, are somehow aware of their missing memories.

Fact 9 : Brazil's memory was erased but the effect didn't last long.

Fact 10 : Your laughter is beautiful, your smile is beautiful, your tears are beautiful, your body is beautiful, your voice is beautiful, your soul is beautiful, you're beautiful.

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[This is a long one but, I hope it wasn't strayed]

[I've been getting messages on when the harem will stop or when is the limit...?]

[Well... Just 12 more to go... *Nervously laugh*]

[Hey, don't look at me like that, and don't highlight a comment on it either! > <]

[There's not much reverse harem stories out there!]

[Ehem , anyways- I hope you enjoyed it]

[And see ya on the next one ^^]

[Much love ~]

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Chapter 11 : Astrophile

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[And I'm sorry that I'm late... Well, SUPER late πˆπ]

[Enjoy ~]

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"Philipia..."

Who's calling me.

"Philipia..."

Such a warm voice.

"Hey, philipia"

So pleasant.

I slowly opened my eyes and I was greeted by a blinding light.

Surrounded by flowers that surpasses my height, a person stands infront of me.

"Good afternoon, did you sleep well? Philipia"

My eyes widen as I try to say the name of the person.

"----- ?"

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I flutter my eyes open and the first thing I saw was the ceiling.

I'm in my room and I'm laying on my bed.

I groaned as I sit up from my position before looking around "what time is it..." I mumbled and blindly look for my phone.

When I found it underneath my pillow, I opened it and checked the time.

3 : 34 am

It's still early and my alarm hasn't gone off.

Oh right, it's Saturday.

I yawned and stretch my arms backwards before hopping down and groggily walk to my bathroom.

After doing my business, I sat back down and flop down again.

I stare at the ceiling for a good 5 minutes yet my eyes doesn't feel heavy anymore.

"I can't go back to sleep" I said and got up.

I grabbed my jacket and phone before going out of my room as quietly as possible since everyone is still *probably* asleep.

Well, they're definitely still asleep since it's 3 in the morning and it's Saturday.

Nobody wants to wake up 3 in the morning on a weekend.

When I got to the lounge, I stood by the window and pushed aside the curtains.

The sky was still dark and the place was empty.

Even from this floor of the building, I can still– slightly see down.

This is a good time to take a (early dawn) morning stroll.

Zipping the jacket close, I went ahead and twist the doorknob open before closing it behind me.

"Even though it's still summer, dawn is still pretty cold" I shiver and warm myself up a little while going to the elevator.

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I got down and exit the building when an unexpected friend meet me.

"Why hello, athena" I greeted and she cooed at me, nuzzling her face on my finger "are you also out here to stretch your wings?"

She cooed in response.

I giggled and placed her on my left shoulder before we started walking around the area.

"Woah, look at the sky, even though it's already 3 am there are still stars"

Athena cooed and leans her face on my cheek "I know, it's beautiful"

We walked further more and arrived at the plaza.

It was eerie and empty, a sense of solitude yet serenity, I walk towards the fountain and sat at the side, staring down at the water.

I giggled as I saw a few coins under it. I guess, no matter how old you get, you still have your sense of childhood in you.

I sat there for a few minutes; leaned back with my hands as a support, taking in all the early dawn breeze.

Athena then perks and starts flying around me, she pokes my nose and I turn to her.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

She cooed and flew much higher.

"Do you want to show me something?" I asked and she suddenly flew towards the wooden area just besides the plaza.

I stood up and fixed my jacket before following her.

"Athena, where are you taking me?" I asked, pushing aside some leaves and taking a step one at a time between the tall grass and bushes.

She would stop every now and then to wait for me but, it feels like I've been walking for a while now and I'm starting to walk even deeper.

I stop to catch for my breath "Athena, I think we should go back, if we walk any further we'll get lost"

She cooed and continued.

"Alright, alright..."

I sighed just followed on her whims for now– it is Saturday so there's nothing to worry.

When I took one step, I suddenly trip and fall on my knee first, causing it to bruise from a twig with a thorn.

"Oh dear"

Athena then flew to me and cooed at me; I think she's apologizing but she still wants me to continue further.

"It's okay, it'll heal, it's a small wound anyways"

She seems satisfied and ventured even further.

I chuckled in response.

I followed her again until I felt a soft breeze pass through me.

Did we perhaps arrived somewhere?

The air was dense earlier on the way.

I walked even more and leaned on the trunk of a tree before looking ahead of me...

It was a place full of red dandelions, the trees encircle this hidden garden and it fully shows the early starry sky.

"Whoah..." I said in awe.

I heard Athena cooed at me and I followed to where she was going before I saw a person.

There was someone at the middle of the place.

I walked closer to take a closer look before they noticed my presence and a twig snapped.

They turn to me and I could fully see who it was.

Eyes that didn't match; violet and silver that seems to contain the galaxy, and skin like the endless starry sky.

"Cosmos?"

He perks up "I'm surprised you immediately knew"

"The air around you is the same as when you wear the helmet" I explained and walked closer to him.

"I see" he simply said and went back to what he was doing.

There was an expensive looking telescope that was long, and I can tell it wasn't your average telescope.

There was also a bunch of things laid on the ground with two different bags which I assumed is for the telescope and his other equipments.

"Have you always been able to breath the air?" I asked and took a sit next to the bag.

"Yes, I just dislike the pollution in the morning up until evening, but

it's different when it's dawn" he explained and adjusted something from his telescope.

"So the helmet was like for purification?"

He nodded "but it's also contains something more that only I can breath, additionally it's also just a helmet that cools my head"

"I guess space is a cold place"

"Yeah" he said and pressed a switch "it's a really cold place" before he bends a little to peek in the telescope.

I examined him and realized that his eyelashes were really long and his expression doesn't change either, much like Nepal.

But Nepal shows a lot of expressions lately ever since the summer camp incident.

I look up at the sky and stare at the beauty of it.

"Oh right, I heard you went to the museum?" He asked, without looking at me and his other eye still at the telescope.

"Oh not yet, we'll go today, later at noon, would you like to come?"

He turns to me and shake his head "I already know what I need to know"

Athena then lands on top of my head and rests there, good thing her claws doesn't hurt much.

"So, what are you doing here so early in the morning?" He asked.

"I just woke up from a dream, and I couldn't sleep anymore afterwards"

"Was it a bad dream?"

I shake my head "nope, it was just weird, although I can no longer remember it"

He raised a brow, "hmm, that's normal, but one can tell if it's bad or

not"

"It wasn't really bad, but I felt really warm and fuzzy in the inside"

Cosmos sighed as he hopelessly look at his telescope, maybe he couldn't find what he was looking for.

"Fuzzy and warm huh" he mumbled before sitting down and taking two parts of something and began assembling them.

"It must be a good dream then" he added.

I smiled and pull my knees closer to my chest "yeah, I guess it was"

I closed my eyes and inhaled the dawn breeze.

"Good for you" he said.

I chuckled softly and stayed there like that.

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We stayed for about an hour before cosmos started packing up and we began walking back to the dorm..

"Don't tell anyone I can breath without the helmet, it's a hassle" he said as he exit the elevator.

I nodded.

"Okay, thanks and..."

The elevators starts to close.

"You smell lovely" he continued.

When the door finally closed, I blinked a few times before sniffing my wrist if I smell like anything.

"I don't smell anything" I mumbled before the elevator opens and brought me to my floor.

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9 : 30 am

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"A museum?" Brunei asked while washing the dishes that Malaysia didn't wash this morning.

I nodded at his question "Egypt and Nepal are going, as well as Malaysia and Indonesia"

Brunei thinks for a minute and hands me the plate that I wiped it dry.

"I already know who Armageddon is, so I guess I don't have to? Besides, it's hot outside"

I giggled "Joe said the same" I said.

"Sorry, I'm just really weak at this kind of heat, even in my country, and besides, it's Saturday"

"It's okay"

After cleaning the dishes, I went ahead and took a shower before wearing any casual clothes that would be easy to move in.

"Philipia!~" Malaysia called outside my room "are you ready???"

"I'll be ready in a second" I replied.

"It's okay, take your time!" He responded before walking away.

I placed all the necessary things I'll need in my bag before wearing it.

I took my hat and head out of my room.

Malaysia and Indonesia were now fully dressed and waiting at the living room with Egypt and Nepal at the door.

They saw me as I stepped out.

"Waaaa~ philipia is so cute! Simple but so cute!!!!" Malaysia jumps from his seat and tackled me into a hug.

I giggled and hugged back "thank you, you look really cute today too, Malaysia"

Malaysia blushes and spins "it is summer so I wanted to wear all the clothes I bought"

Indonesia then stood up "I wore a new clothes too" he said.

"Yes, and you look really cool with it" I smiled.

Indonesia puffs his chest out proudly.

Egypt sighs and shakes his head, "come on, I'm really aching to see the museum already!"

"Chill, relax okay?" Israel said while he sat at the sofa.

"You don't understand! That place contains all the secret and answers Pangaea ever hides!" He declared with his fist closed.

Israel sighs and let his head fall back "great, another crazy idiot, first germs, now Egypt?"

"What about me?"

Suddenly, germany came out of the hall "what about another crazy idiot?" He asked again, glaring at Israel.

"Uhhh, I dunno, what do you think?" Israel retuned the question which angered Germany.

"You shall be cursed! Cursed I tell you! Cursed! I am a loyal devotee! Your puny brain cannot even comprehend this *crazy idiot*!" He yelled and stomps his feet.

Malaysia sighs and took my hand, pulling me towards the door.

"We're going now" I said to Brunei and he nodded.

"Take care" he replied.

As we closed the door behind us, the argument between Israel and Germany became muffled.

"Wow, even here I can hear his voice" Indonesia chuckled.

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Pangaea academy gate.

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Indonesia points towards the direction, where Russia and Kazhakstan were already waiting at the gate.

Kazhakstan saw us first and waved at us, Russia turned around afterwards.

"Good morning" Kazhakstan greeted with a grin.

I smiled "good morning, Kazhakstan and Russia"

Russia nodded at me and pats my head "morning, sunshine"

"Morningggggg" Malaysia happily greeted while jumping.

"Wow, full for energy aren't we?" Kazhakstan chuckled.

Malaysia nodded, eyes filled with sparkles and he's obviously excited "it's been so long since the last time I went to a museum!"

"What are you a kid?" Indonesia said.

Malaysia nodded "yeah!"

They laughed at his reply.

"By the way, can I say that you look stunning today? Sunstar?"

I blinked at Kazhakstan and look down to my outfit "thank you"

"It's a simple white dress with no other design but, you almost look like an angel"

Russia then flicks his forehead "stop flirting so early in the morning, and what's with that nickname?"

Kazhakstan chuckled "what? It suits her" he smiled.

Egypt scoffs and crossed his hands on his chest "I say; the nickname *anuket* suits her more"

Russia shakes his head "no, *sunshine* suits her more"

"That nickname is too common, rusky" Kazhakstan berates.

The three then soon starts to berate.

I took a deep breath and step back a little while fanning myself.

"Are you hot?" Nepal asked besides me.

I nodded "yes, even though I'm supposed to be used to this, I guess the heat here in Pangaea is different in mine"

He hummed in response before he takes something out of his pocket "are friends allowed to wipe each other's sweat?" He asked, hesitant when he takes out his handkerchief.

"Oh no, it's okay, I have my own, but to others I guess it's okay"

"Hmmm, then, can I wipe your sweat? As a friend I'm concerned"

I giggled at Nepal, somehow I find it cute. He did say he didn't had any friends and that me and Egypt are his first.

It also makes me sad that all throughout his childhood he didn't have anyone and always stuck in his study room.

I hope he can at least feel a little free when he's here.

"Okay, I don't mind" I leaned close and Nepal carefully wipes my sweat off of my forehead.

"Hey, me too~" Malaysia steps in from behind me and Nepal wipes his sweat off.

"Sorry if it doesn't feel comfortable" Nepal said.

Malaysia chuckled "what are you talking about? You're just wiping a sweat"

Nepal looked surprised but felt relieved.

After the arguments between the three, we proceed to set out to the main city *panthalassa*.

They berated whether they should use a cab or the public train.

But Russia also suggested riding his panzer tank, but it was immediately scratched out by Kazhakstan and Egypt.

So in the end, we decided to use the public train instead.

"How weird this is" Kazhakstan spoke "7 country leaders using a public train in Pangaea"

Kazhakstan and Russia sat at the left bench with Nepal and Egypt while me, Malaysia and Indonesia sat on the other bench.

Malaysia laughed "everyone keeps looking and everyone keeps bowing"

Egypt sighs "I guess they got intimidated by my pharaoh presence, ha, ha, ha"

Russia stares at him with a confused look before facing me again "is he always like this?"

I nodded "it's cute isn't it?"

"Cute? That's cute to you?" Russia then suddenly goes deep into

thought.

Indonesia taps my shoulder and hands me a gum "want one?" He asked while chewing.

I nodded and he gave me two of it.

I ate the two and started chewing before I saw Malaysia blowing it into a huge bubble.

I giggled and followed after him, as well as Indonesia.

Now the three of us were having a bubble competition.

"Ack!" Malaysia's bubble pop and it covered around his mouth, now there was a pink sticky gum around it "oh no"

Mine popped immediately since I laughed at Malaysia.

"I guess it's Indonesia who won" I said and chewed again.

I look over to Russia who's staring at me and smiled when our eyes met.

I smiled back.

I turn to Kazhakstan who winked at me.

I winked back.

For some reason he started trembling while holding his mouth and his face flushed.

"Hey, what's wrong?" Russia asked.

"It... It was so adorable..." He mumbled with a high-pitched tone.

Russia turns to me and I shake my head in confusion.

Was I not supposed to wink back? Was it perhaps a bad gesture to do?

"The internet is slow here"

I turn to Egypt who's using his phone while Nepal is reading a pocket book.

Somehow, in this train.

It was peaceful.

I suddenly feel like an average person who's living an average life.

It's so calm.

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9 : 50 am [Panthalassa City]

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Malaysia stretched his back and so did Indonesia and Egypt after we got off the train.

"That was a long ride" Indonesia groans.

"Really? That was like 5 stops only" Kazhakstan replied.

I look around the place and noticed that it was less people, more spacious, buildings and tall structures were built far apart from each other, the side walks were clean yet there were still people cleaning and sweeping, the people walking by looked like high status.

"The people living in the main city are usually the ones who has personal work under the continent leader, but normal people can also live here" Kazhakstan explained.

"I see, it's like where all fancy business men work"

He chuckled and nodded "yep, something like that"

We walked a bit further and bought foods on the side walk on the

way.

"There's 5 lane on the road, that's too wide" Egypt spoke as he watch the cars that pass by.

"This isn't your average country" Nepal added and both of them nodded.

We walked again while looking at every direction to every buildings, roads, shops, side food, parks, etc.. that we see.

It's almost like we were tourist who's just walking around.

"Are we there yet?" Malaysia asked.

"No" Russia replied.

"Are we there yet?"

"No..."

"Hmmmmmmm, are we there yet?"

"Damn it, not yet!"

Malaysia and Indonesia laughed at Russia's irritated reaction.

A few more walks.

"Are we there yet?" Malaysia asked again.

"No! Not ye--"

"We're here" Kazhakstan said.

We all stop and turn towards the direction where Kazhakstan was looking.

The museum.

From the outside, it had gigantic, tall four pillars that carry the triangular like roof, and stairs that is wide and spacious that leads to the entrance.

"Huh..." Egypt spoke while all of our heads were looking at the tall and wide structure "I can't feel my neck anymore" he added.

"Come on" Kazhakstan then leads the way and walked up the stairs.

"It's like a mix of Greek and British" Russia comments.

Nepal then hands out his hand to me as we walk up the stairs "so you won't fall" he said.

I giggled and accepted it, holding onto his hand.

"Mine too" Egypt then takes my other hand and the three of us walked up, hand in hand.

"Heyyy! She's from our group!" Malaysia whines and ran up to us.

Malaysia then holds Nepal's hand while Indonesia held Egypt's.

Now it looked like a triangle and I'm the tip.

"Let's run!" Malaysia suggest.

"What? Run?! What if we trip and we'll die?!" Egypt protests

"We won't! Right Indonesia?"

"Yep! In one!"

"Hold on a second mongrels!"

"Twooooooo"

"Wait! Wait! Think carefully! You imbeciles!'

"Threeeeee!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!"

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"Handle... Haaa the pharaoh with care...mongrels..." Egypt wheezes on the floor when we arrived at the top.

Malaysia was still energetic, Indonesia was catching his breath while laughing and Nepal was helping Egypt who's almost out of breath.

"You guys are like children" Russia said who finally got here.

I giggled "it was kind of fun"

"Yeah but dangerous, although you looked like you didn't even ran out of breath" Kazhakstan said.

"I'm used to it"

He blinks a few times before laughing "hahaha! Alright"

After Egypt and Malaysia calmed down, we went inside the museum.

The inside was pretty and spacious as it was on the outside. The ceilings were so tall that even Russia's height couldn't reach it.

The floor was made of carpet and so was the wall; it was like the same thing you see as you enter the cinema, the quiet, serene hallway with only a limited lights on the side that makes the place dim.

"Woah" Malaysia gawks at the place, he runs inside and spin as he savour just the lounge area.

The lady behind the desk bows at us in such proper manner "may the heavens bless you, country leaders, and welcome to the museum of pangaea" she greets.

"Ahh, yeah, you may rise, so anyways what's good or what can you recommend us here?" Russia walks up to the front desk and talks to the lady behind it.

"Greetings, country leader Russia, and in reply to your question, we have a lot to recommend, but our famous showcase is the gallery

room where the first female leader Armageddon is"

Kazhakstan leans on the desk "other than her, is there anymore, like, anything new?"

"Greetings, country leader Kazhakstan, and in reply to your question, we have the new displays on room 5 where new discoveries were found by our professional archeologists"

As the two talks to the lady, I walk to the janitor who was cleaning not far from us "uhm, excuse me" I called.

The janitor turns to me and bows "greetings, may the heavens bless you country leader"

I bowed as well "so may you too"

"Your words are wasted on this humble one" he said and straighten up "what can I help you?"

"Uhm, can I ask where the restroom is?"

He gives me the direction and I bowed and thanked him.

"Where are you going?" Nepal asked.

I stop and turn to him, I gesture him to wait for me and he nodded immediately, he must've known what I meant.

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After doing my business, I placed my bag on the counter sink and stare at the mirror.

Removing my hat, I folded it neatly that it perfectly fit in my bag.

After washing my hands and drying them off, I exit the restroom and went back to the group.

As I got closer, I noticed they were crowding on one place and talking to someone.

"What's going on?" I asked Nepal who's standing behind.

He turns to me "it seems to be an old friend" he replied.

I moved closer and saw a familiar mask.

He was talking happily with Russia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Kazhakstan before he saw me.

"Philia!" He called and immediately ran up to me, greeting me with a tight hug.

"Oh! T-tethys?"

He laughed and nuzzle his face on my neck "I missed you so much..." He whispered.

I quickly composed myself and hug him back, patting him behind.

"I missed you too"

He separates himself from me "glad that I knew you missed me" he smiled.

"How are you? It's been a long time"

He shrugs "oh well, you know, I'm okay, just a little fatigue"

"Just a little, your bags under your eyes could almost make a perfect copy of eyeliner here" Russia comments.

Egypt gasp "excuse me, these are symbols of royalty and luxury!" He defends.

"See what I mean?"

Tethys scoffs "well mine are a symbol of hard work, look out rusty, I might deduct your pay"

"Blyad, I don't work for you"

"But you'll soon work under me, I'll be your big boss someday"

Russia rolled his eyes "whatever, anyways, why are you here?"

Tethys moves his mask to the side of his head "I come here to relax after my heir duties, but since you are all here might as well tour you around" he winked.

We followed Tethys after he talked to the lady at the desk.

"Why is he appearing now when the time I needed his time to appear so that I can file a complaint, he wasn't present" Egypt grumbled but enough for me and Nepal to hear.

"He's a continent leader, he's busier than us" Nepal said.

Egypt scoffs "so what? Is he a pharaoh?"

Nepal shakes his head "no but he's higher than a pharaoh and he can eradicate your country if he wants to with one word"

Egypt was taken aback and was about to say something but closed his mouth instead, crossing his arms and grumbling under his breath.

"What will you show us first Tethys?" Malaysia asked while reading the pamphlet he got from the front desk.

He glance at us over his right shoulder with a smirk "you'll see" he said and continued on to the hall.

He stop infront of the door and turn to us "first, I'll show you the continent leaders"

He lightly knocked on the double door three times before it opened, there must be guards from the other side by the door.

"Welcome to the room of the continent leaders" he declared and we were in awe of a massive, spacious and wide room.

Walls were filled with oversized portraits, whether it be a landscape or portrait, all protected with a glass and two dimly lit light on the bottom, to show the colours of the canvas.

But what awed us more was the maze like display, also protected with a glass and separated with a red stanchion.

"Woahhhhh!!!!!" Malaysia exclaimed that his voice echoed; although there was a sign on the wall to 'keep quiet' the guards that were by the door didn't even warn us.

Must be because Tethys is here.

"Look at that" Russia points to a certain portrait where a strict looking man wearing a very old looking traditional Pangaean clothes stands with a woman besides him.

"These two are vaalbara and Ur" Tethys explained "it is said that they traveled this one landmass of continent and brought followers with them to create their own place to call home"

Egypt leans close to me "what a sad sense of fashion"

"Is that their kid?" Kazhakstan points to the portrait besides them, a portrait of man with a woman besides him as well, they wore the same traditional outfit but a little improved.

"That is Columbia and his wife paleoproterozoic"

Egypt leans close again "poor, poor, sense of fashion"

I giggled at his comments.

Indonesia then points to another portrait, "who's that?"

Tethys stopped and examined it "this is Rodinia, and her husband Neoproterozoic, the creators of languages"

We went ahead and checked the display stand that was beneath the portrait; there was a very, very, very old paper that it turned coffee brown, the edges already had a torn and damages but the writings were stil legible enough.

"They used papyrus and animal skin for that paper, and I'm pretty sure that's soot and water mixed together because there are traces of smudges" Egypt explained besides me

The old paper contains all the languages she and her husband made, including the very old ancients ones.

"Yikes, that's a very old Rusky language" kazhakstan stated and points to a certain part of the paper.

Russia leans close to read it.

"What does it say?"

It took a few seconds before Russia formed a smirked and scoff before proceeding to the next one.

"Hey! What does it say?" Kazhakstan curiously follows after Russia.

I leaned close as well and tried to search for my language "hmm..."

"Oh? I see mine! Wow, it's a very old one" Malaysia stated and pointed it.

"Found mine as well" Egypt said "and it's not a good one"

"I didn't know this word even existed, nobody use this word anymore" Nepal mumbled to himself as he found his as well.

"Did you found yours?" Indonesia leans to me.

I shake my head "not yet, it's too many"

"Hahaha, yeah, I can't find mine either"

"Before all the races broke apart and went on to their own, they each choose a language and letters of their own and adapt it to their territory until the were able to improvise it and add more into it" Tethys explained "now, the world has their own languages... Rodinia is also the one who made the English language and the main purpose for making it, so that everyone can understand without any language barrier"

Malaysia snorted and leaned close to us "America has no official language at all, maybe he was just lazy to make one his own" he whispered to which Indonesia held back a laugh and I giggled.

Proceeding to the tour, I gave up trying to find my language since there was too many to even find it and the writings are almost faded on some part.

I went ahead and look over to the other portraits and where their clothes have began to change and start to become advance.

"If Rodinia is the creator of languages, Pannotia is the brain of all monarchies, she started the types such as kings, queens, emperor or empress, and like the languages, the different races took one of their own and adapted it to their territory, now some has empires, some has tribes, some has kingdoms or those gothic, Victorian shits– I don't fucking know"

Russia laughed "what a bad tour guide" he said.

Tethys glared at him which didn't even bothered Russia.

"But anyways, you get the point"

"Ahhh, so I guess my country started as a tribe" I said to myself as I stared at her portrait when I noticed another portrait that caught my attention.

I walk over it and examined it, I look down to the sign to whom it was and it says.

'*From the right; Calymmian: 6th child of Rodinia. From the left, Armageddon: first female leader*'

I look back to the woman who's sitting on a throne like chair.

Her body was adorned with what looked like jewels, diamonds and all different types of stones while her crown had stones draping on her face.

Her dress looked like one of those royal Victorian dresses and the man, wore the same colour but the opposite sex.

Even if it's just a painting she was undeniably beautiful, her eyes almost looked like it was glowing yellow, and the light that shines at the picture makes it look like it's glowing even more.

"They said, the portrait, or perhaps the painter couldn't really paint how beautiful her eyes were, even the painter himself confessed that at that moment, he fell for her" Tethys stood besides me as he explained, yet I didn't even look at him since my eyes were glued to hers.

"She's beautiful..." I mumbled.

"Yeah, she is, even the first time I went here as a kid, I had the same reaction"

"Can I know where her history is?" I asked.

Tethys chuckled and pats my head "do you have to ask? Isn't this the purpose of visiting a museum? To know what it is to know about everything?"

I look at Tethys and smiled.

Tethys then walks towards the other door when Egypt stops halfway to look at the portrait where Armageddon is.

"Hmm, now I'm starting to doubt if it's even her who father met" he said "but her beauty is indescribable, her dress even enhances it more"

Nepal nodded who's also looking at the picture "she looks like you" He said.

I blinked a few times and stare back at it again, "hmm, to me she looks like someone I know... Someone, I haven't met yet I already did...?"

I turn to Egypt and Nepal again who's looking at me with a questionable look.

"I didn't quite get it" Egypt said.

I shake my head and brush it off "it's nothing, nevermind"

Turning to my heel, I followed after the group.

Tethys did the same to the first door; knocking on it lightly and it opens it it's own– well, there are guards behind it but, it makes it look dramatic.

"Second stop! Armageddon's room"

"That's what's it's called? Armageddon's room?" Russia asked.

"It sounds common, it's like a room of your sister that doesn't want any boys in" Malaysia said.

"What a weird way of comparison" Egypt comments.

Malaysia laughed at it while scratching the back of his head.

"Anyways, this room contains all of her everyday life since she's known to document everything"

Unlike the first room, this room was much more spacious yet it was still filled with displays.

Everyone then goes to their own ways to check what catches their interest and I did the same.

"Look" Malaysia then pulls me to a specific display where there were drawings– or better way to explain them, were doodles of someone.

"*Armageddon was known to draw and sketch the people who are close to her"*

Malaysia reads the sign.

"So these are her drawings? But why are some of them torn apart?"

I checked the drawings and you can tell that some of them were drawings of her husband, her children and someone else using a charcoal.

"The only torn pictures are these" Malaysia points and I look over it.

It looked like the same woman doing something yet it was torn, but

oddly enough, it was all torn on the part of her face, so the only thing we can see is her lips or just her body.

"Maybe this person didn't want to be known?" Malaysia wondered.

"Maybe" I mumbled as I checked the rest for more.

I checked the ones she drew of her family and her three sons.

Three sons?

I looked closer and noticed that there was also a torn part of the paper, but unlike the other one where it was obviously torn around the face, this one was torn as if they removed someone.

"Was it perhaps a mistake from the sketches?"

Malaysia shrugs "maybe, but does it matter?"

Yeah, he's probably right, no point thinking too hard about it.

"These looks weird" kazhakstan said and I checked to what they were looking at.

It was a documentary from her.

"what is it?" I asked.

Kazhakstan gave me a space to give me a clear view "it's some sort of like a diary than a documentary" he said.

I tilt my head "why?"

"Look here, it says: *I followed what teacher told me and step outside my garden with my eyes closed, I took 20 steps forward and 3 steps to the left and waited for 10 seconds before someone bumped onto me– like what teacher told me. I still kept my eyes closed yet the person immediately helped me"*

"Sounds like she met someone" I said.

"It doesn't just end there sunstar, it continues right here: *he was the sixth son of a continent leader and the least to inherit anything yet he's a*

person who's satisfied with it, he doesn't complain and he sounds like a humble person, although he still didn't know who I was and assumed I was a maid wondering around for a midnight stroll"

"How cliche" Russia yawns.

"It's a documentary how she met her husband" I said.

Kazhakstan nodded "it's just weird, why would she even walk 20 steps forward with eyes closed? And talk to a person with also your eyes closed?" He asked.

I shrug "maybe she's a peculiar person...?"

"She's not and there's a reason why"

We turn back where Tethys was standing "she closes her eyes for a reason, and you didn't finish reading it" he said.

"Oh really? My bad" kazhakstan chuckled nervously.

I look down again and continued reading the next paragraph "*I close my eyes because people tend to fall for me immediately upon contact with it and I can tell they aren't sincere people unless they get a view of my eyes, I want someone who will like me as me and not because of these eyes. Yet this person, he didn't even question me why my eyes were closed, he just continued talking to me casually, venting out all his frustration and how he's going to be a married for someone he doesn't even know, but to me, I'm glad he's going to be married to me... Teacher is always right, as always"*

And the paragraph ends there.

"So she's a narcissist?" Russia asked and Tethys kicked his knee "ow..?"

"No she's not, she's just special"

"But it's still weird, people tend to fall in love with her upon contact with her eyes? Can't it be just because she's too beautiful?" Kazhakstan sighs.

Tethys shakes his head "if that were the case then she doesn't have to write it again and again in all of her documentaries"

"Hmmmm"

They fall for her because of her eyes?

I held my right eye and soften my gaze and for some reason...

I can relate?

"Hey, Tethys" Malaysia called.

"What?"

"Who is this teacher? Both Armageddon and Calymmian mention this *teacher* a lot, and they highly talk about this teacher with so much respect too"

Tethys went to his side and reads the documentary Malaysia was reading "oh her? She's the teacher of the two and the only one who's close to them; you see, both Calymmian and Armageddon are reserved and quiet people, they aren't sociable and they don't really like talking to people, especially the ones that just wanted to be close to them, but this teacher, she's different, she talks to them casually and they trust her the most"

"Who's she?" Indonesia asks.

He shrugged in response "nobody really knows her real name aside from the two leaders, and they kept it up until to their graves"

"What does she look like" Egypt asked.

"There's a doodle of her, right?"

Egypt raised a brow "you mean sketches of hers?"

"Same thing"

"There are but their torn around the face" Indonesia replied.

"I found one" kazhakstan stated and we all gathered to it "it says

here on what she looks like according to Armageddon and Calymmian"

"So? Read it out loud" Egypt demand.

"Okay, okay, chill; here's what it says: *her eye is of a pure chroma, it is both warm and radiant, Its vibrance can promote feelings of happiness that one cannot fathom, but her right eye is covered in mystery, covered in a material that is not soft yet hard but enough to hide a secret. Her face shape is of that like the heart, neither small nor big, her lips was plump and natural, color it with crimson and rose, it makes her even more exotic. Her voice was soft, gentle, like the morning breeze and cool like the ocean. Her scent can pierce through your nose and send goosebumps that if it has a flavor it would be mint. Unfortunately I am a woman, but if I was a man I would've caged her and lock her up as mine, a precious jewel, and an irreplaceable teacher"*

We were all silent for a moment and looked at each other.

"For short, she's weirdo" Russia breaks that silent and leans back "your grandma is a weirdo"

"If that's how she describes her, we can't do anything about it, at least she has a way with her words"

Malaysian then face him "but the line where she wrote '*if I was a man I would've caged her'* sent a red alert in me, it's a sign to get away from her"

"That changes my perspective of her in one word" Egypt added.

"Maybe the teacher is really a beauty than her, for a woman, she speaks highly and she's really detailed by how she describes her" Nepal spoke.

"Ah, there's more" Indonesia mumbled but enough for us to hear.

"There's more?"

Indonesia nodded.

"Ugh, whatever, just get it on already so we can check out some

more"

He then proceeds to read it out loud *"teacher always wear dark clothes, it suits her, it defines her shape, but it doesn't define her cheerful and smiling face. She wears dark clothes to somehow blend in the dark and be unnoticed by the others, she's very secretive. She also wears a hat that comes with a fabric that covers her face whenever we venture outside the mansion, I wanted to ask what its purpose was but she always replies the same thing 'so people won't remember her' who could not remember her? Even if she is gone, in my mind she's still there, vividly, and clearly. But I don't mind, the sense of being special to her makes me happy, sadly, teacher is gone, and nobody knows where she is like always– someday I guess, she'll pop out of nowhere like before, then maybe, she can stay with us forever... I wonder where my* ***dollie*** *is now"*

Russia groans "what a cringey nickname"

"Actually, the translators weren't sure if it meant dollie or pillie, since she's writing in an old Pangaean and an old language that isn't used anymore and the one you idiots - not you philia- are reading, is the translated version"

I giggled and we all nodded in agreement, completely ignoring the idiot word.

"Whatever, can we go now?" Russia impatiently demands and walks towards the other door.

As we followed behind Tethys and Russia, I walk pass to a display I didn't get to check yet since it was located near the door.

I step close to see what it was and it was an old looking paper that is crumpled and a lot of spilled ink on it.

There was also a bunch of fingerprints, as if the person who wrote it was in a hurry or panicking, or maybe they were clumsy or perhaps accidentally spilled the ink?

"Hmm..."

When I saw what was written, my heart sank, hairs on my arm stood, and my eyes widen from shock.

"H-huh...how..." The words refused to form as I was too surprised, too baffled, too bewildered on what I just read.

"What's wrong?" Nepal asked yet I couldn't answer him so he followed to where I was looking.

He checks what it was and looks for the sign on what it is "it looks like the only thing left of Armageddon's teacher before she disappeared" he said "seems like they couldn't translate it, I guess it's just a doodle of hers?"

No... No it's not a doodle.

"Hey!"

I snapped back when Russia called us over.

Cold sweat was running down my back.

"Are you guys gonna stay or what?" Kazhakstan asked.

"Coming, let's go philipia" Nepal held out his hand but I simply stared at him with a stunned expression "hey, what's wrong?"

I swallowed down the words I was about to say before glancing over to my friends waiting at the door "n-nothing, I just felt, really...c-cold"

Nepal looks around "it is air-conditioned here, let's borrow kazhakstan's jacket" he said and held my wrist.

I look at the display once more as the words written on it was easily read by my mind.

I could no longer remember what happened afterwards.

Aside from Tethys explaining what we were looking at, my mind was blank.

All I could think was that two words that was written on the old paper that could turn to ash if you hold it wrong...

And it didn't take long when our trip in the museum ended.

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"Well, I had fun today" Tethys said as he escorts us out the museum.

"It was so fun! Lots of cool stuff too" Malaysia happily squealed, holding on to the pamphlet like it was a souvenir.

Indonesia held the camera "got a bunch of photos too"

Tethys laughed "well, if you want to look for me I'm either at the city library, or here"

He turns to me and lift my chin up "hope you can come and visit me as well, philia"

I stare at him and smiled.

I can't let him notice, I can't let anyone notice but I guess my blank state from earlier already gave it away.

"I'll try, Tethys"

"Well then, see ya, masky" Russia waves and went down the stairs.

The others followed as well after waving and bidding farewell at Tethys.

"Take care Tethys, and please don't overdo it" I said.

Tethys smiled and moved his mask to the side "I will and I promise philia" he took my right hand and kissed the back of it, holding it to his chest afterwards "I'll miss you again, and don't forget"

He leans in before taking the sampaguita from my ear "I love you~"

I blinked a few times and nodded "of course, I love you too"

He chuckled "I know you'd say that but I guess our words has a different meaning but, it's fine"

I stand on my toe and kissed his forehead before turning to my heel, I saw Nepal not far from us yet and waiting for me.

"See you, Tethys"

"See you soon as well, philia"

As my hand slips away from his, I suddenly felt sad leaving him all alone.

I guess when you're the next heir to the entire continents, pressures and responsibilities will fall on your shoulders.

When we all got down, I look back up and still see him standing by the door, emitting such solitude and loneliness.

His figure stands there, at the top, proud and high yet...

"Poor Tethys" I said as my eyes couldn't get them off of him.

"Yeah, poor Tethys" Malaysia said and turns to me "but we have to do our best so that when Tethys comes back, he doesn't have much to do now"

"Really?"

He nodded "yep! Really! So let's do our best!"

I agreed with Malaysia and we went ahead to walk back to where we walked earlier.

I stop once more and look back to see his figure no longer standing there.

"I give you my blessing, Tethys, may the heaven shower you with it"

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When we got to the train, Malaysia was leaning his head on my left shoulder while Indonesia was checking the photos he took earlier.

Egypt was also sleeping but had his head leaned back on the window while Nepal had his arms crossed and head lay low.

Thank goodness the train isn't bumpy or noisy unlike in my country and they can sleep even for a short while.

I look over to kazhakstan who's scrolling through his phone and Russia is sleeping with the same position as Nepal.

I leaned back and leaned my head on Malaysia and recalled what happened at the museum.

This '*teacher*' isn't just any ordinary royal teacher...

And I'm curious to know how she's able to write it.

I sighed and felt Malaysia's head almost slipping from my shoulder.

I placed my arm under his chin and held his other cheek to secure his head on my shoulder.

It's no use thinking about it, and maybe I'm just overthinking it too...

Yeah... Maybe that's it.

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"Sister..." I called and my older sister Gondwanda peeks in.

She has this creepy grin that makes her squint her eyes "ahhhh, ahhhh, ahhh~ I saw, I saw, I saw~~" she said in the most creepy

way.

"She saw, she saw, she saw~~" the same creepy way yet soft tone of voice; repeats.

My second older sister Laurasia.

"So? What do you think?" I asked not looking over their way who's peeking by the door with only the face.

Gondwanda steps inside, tiptoeing while swinging her head left and right towards me "pretty~ Pretty~ she was!" She leaned on my face "Prettyyyyy!!!!" And yelled.

Laurasia did the same thing "pretty~ pretty~ she said, she was! Prettyyyyy!!!!"

"Did you see Laurasia?"

"Laurasia saw, Gondwanda, yellow?"

"Yellow~~"

"Mellow?"

"Hello~~"

"Kihihihihihihihihi~~~!!!!!!"

And of course, that cackling laugh and followed by Laurasia's childlike giggling.

"Earlier, when she saw a specific display, she had some sort of reaction" I said and went towards the display she was looking at with Nepal.

"The last and only letter of Armageddon's teacher, even Armageddon herself doesn't know what it means"

Gondwanda leans close and press her cheeks against mine, Laurasia did the same to the other.

"Cannot be read~"

"Can't, can't, can't~~"

"Secret, shhhhhh"

"Cannot be known, Gondwanda? Shhhh"

They turn to me "cannnnnn weeeee????" They both asked while pulling the bottom of their eyes, showing the pink.

"No" I sternly said and walked away "I simply called you both on what you think about why she reacted that way"

My sisters, aren't normal, when they see someone with yellow eyes, they become obsessed with it and they'll do a bunch of experiment.

Of course, not the type of experiment that would hurt someone, but the type of experiment that can make someone uncomfortable.

They are highly fascinated with yellow eyes.

And I guess Malaysia's and philipia's yellow eyes caught their attention, though Malaysia wears a contact lense to hide it unintentionally.

But they were still able to find out about it.

"Awwww, boohooo~" Gondwanda sat on the display "cannot read, cannot beeeeeeee, why oh why, oh wwhyyyy Tethys?"

"Right, right, rightttttt, Tethys~~"

I sighed "she wouldn't react like that if she can't read it!" I yelled.

Gondwanda gasped - sarcastically, before hopping down and circle around me, Laurasia did the same.

"Who, she? Why? What? When? How??? Unless?"

"Gondwanda, unless?"

"Unless..."

She taps the glass of the display "tick, tock, tick, tock, tickity tock,

tock~"

"Gondwanda, clock?"

"Laurasia, clockkk~"

I raised a brow "clock?"

They both giggled "answer, yes? Answer? Yesssss"

"Gondwanda, yes??"

"Laurasia, yesss"

I sighed "speak more clearly, what do you mean?"

They grinned at me, eyes wide, pupils dilated and teeth showing "circle, oh circle, round and round and roundddd, ring, ring, ring~??"

"Ring around the rosie~ well, oh well, spin, spun, worlddd~"

This is the brain behind the machine that erased the memories of these leaders.

Maybe it's because they're so smart they lost it, they're nuts.

But all my life, they're ridiculous riddles helped me understand a little bit on what I need to do and what I have to do, it even enhanced my thinking.

I just have to look at it on a third perspective.

"Fine, I'll figure it out myself" I said and walked away.

They giggled and they didn't even bother to tone it down.

Closing the door behind me, I leaned on it, looking down my hand to where I held philia.

As always, she looks stunning as ever..., I can never get enough.

Wait for me, philia, just a little more.

So trust me...

Trust me that whatever I'm gonna do, it's all for you...

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"How was the trip?" Brunei asked.

We just got back and changed into more comfortable clothes.

Though Malaysia stayed in his room since he exhausted himself.

"It was fun" I simply said and stare at my reflection from the tea that Indonesia brew, "it was fun..." My voice trails off before I took a sip.

"Did something happen, angel?" Israel asked and took a seat next to me "you don't look good"

"Yeah, I noticed it too" Indonesia said who came out of the kitchen carrying a tray of snacks "tell us"

I shake my head and smiled "nothing really, I just saw something that reminded me of something sad, I'm sorry I ruined the mood"

Israel rubs my back "that's fine"

Indonesia sat down "really? Alright then"

I smiled and tried my best to pretend that nothing was wrong.

But clearly, there is...

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2 : 30 am

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Like yesterday, I woke up early dawn.

And like yesterday, I went out to have a stroll and was greeted by Athena.

Hello athena, how was your da--"

"Monchi!"

Someone yelled which startled me.

I turn around and saw Australia running, his jacket loosely hanging by his shoulders, exposing his bare shoulders since he's wearing a tank top and sweatpants.

"St-stop him! Haaa!" He wheezed as he stop to catch his breath.

I tilt my head when I saw that he was chasing a monkey.

"Austral-- ah! Wahh!!" Suddenly the monkey jumped on my face causing me to stumble back and fall.

Athena then immediately flew away since the target of the monkey was her.

It kept jumping and landing on my stomach causing me to cough a little bit.

"Got ya!" Australia grabbed the monkey midair before flopping down on the ground "I'm so sorry, philipia!" He said.

I chuckled and shake my head "i-it's okay..." I said and sat up while dusting my shirt.

"Are you okay?" Australia got up and lend me a hand, to which I accepted.

"Yes, I'm okay, I was just surprised" I smiled and turn to the monkey resting on Australia's shoulder "hello there" I greeted.

He simply stared at me and back to Athena who now landed back on my left shoulder.

"Anyways, what are you doing out here so early?" He asked and we began to walk.

"Oh, I just couldn't go back to sleep"

"Nightmare?"

I shake my head "not really, more like, I had something in mind that's been bothering me"

"Hmmm, care to share? I'm a good listener" he said with a grin.

"It's okay, I'd rather not talk about it, that's why I went for a... stroll" my voice trails off as we arrived to the plaza.

I saw Australia had a worried expression but didn't pry anymore– which I'm glad.

"Alright, well, anyways are you gonna come with us to th--"

His sentence was cut off when his monkey (monchi) jumped from his shoulder and charge at Athena who was able to dodge and fly away.

"The hell! Monchi!! Damn it!" He exclaimed and began chasing after them.

I followed afterwards.

Athena flew to the wooden area and monchi used the trees to hop on a branch one after another, gaining closer to Athena who can only hover above.

"Monchi! Stop!" He yelled while pushing aside leaves out of his way.

When monchi was now out of sight, Athena stopped and scanned the surroundings.

"Athena! Be careful!" I warned and she cooed at me.

She was about to fly back towards our direction when she was suddenly tackled down to the ground by a monkey.

"Ahhhh!!! Monchi!!!!!" Australia yelled and hurriedly went to them.

Athena was on the ground with the monkey on top of her, screeching at her and fighting back as Athena was struggling to break free.

"Damn it! Get off her you perverted monkey!" He pulled monchi off of Athena and I immediately picked her up, pulling her close to my chest, caressing her wings.

If she was injured in any way, Greece will definitely be mad at me, I don't want that.

And I know too well how he hates me.

"Whew..." I sighed and look down at Athena who didn't seem to be hurt; what a brave owl, despite her small physique, she's a fighter.

"Sorry again... Whoah"

I look over to where Australia was looking and realized we arrived to the place where cosmos would often stargaze.

And like yesterday, at the middle of this place, he was there; without his helmet.

"Whoa, whoah whoahhhhh cosmossss!" Australia called and ran up to him.

Cosmos didn't even bother to look at our direction or even when Australia wrapped an arm around him.

"Hello" he simply replied while assembling his telescope.

"I didn't know you were hiding such a handsome face, mate!" Australia grins and nuzzle his fist on his head "man, and here I thought you were just hiding your insecurity or something"

Cosmos looks at him with a bored expression "I don't, I just don't like the dirty air" he replied.

Australia roared a laugh "right, right, but you're in Pangaea! There's not much pollution"

Cosmos sighed and removed Australia's hand around his neck "it's still polluted if there are Cars and engine going around"

"So you're another Singapore, that's alright"

I giggled and took a seat on the ground as I watch cosmos assemble.

He noticed my presence and simply nodded at me.

"Do you do this all the time?" Australia asked and took a seat crossed legged besides me, holding onto monchi who– I think, has gotten tired since his eyes were getting drowsy while staring at Athena.

"Only on weekends, and since summer vacation is already on this monday, I'm already spending my free time on stargazing" he replied.

Me and Australia glance at each other.

"So this summer vacation you're going back to space?"

Cosmos nodded "what about you?"

Australia scoffs "obviously I'm going back to my country, I'm sure philipia is the same"

I nodded.

Cosmos hummed in response before putting the final piece; he rotates the first layer and the same as the second in counter clockwise.

"Can I try?" Australia asked and cosmos nodded, stepping back a little.

Australia happily stood up and peeked at the telescope while holding on to the zoom adjustment.

"So, how did it go?" Cosmos sat besides me and whispered.

"It went well..."

"Liar.."

He narrowed his gaze at me "so?"

I shrink between my shoulders "I don't want to talk about it..."

"Whoah! I can see the moon!!!" Australia exclaimed who was engrossed on the telescope.

Cosmos then leans close "you saw something... Didn't you?"

Athena then screeches and started flapping her wings against cosmos, I think she felt agitated.

"Athena?"

"Whoah, what happened to her?" Australia looks back at us.

I stood up and held her again before she calms down "I'm sorry, I think Athena doesn't feel good today"

Hurriedly walking away, Australia calls out to me "wait! Philipia! We're gonna swim at the beach with everyone later! Wanna join?"

I stop and glance back at him from my shoulder "of course, I'll join" I replied before continued walking back.

As I exit the place and arrived back at the plaza and gasped for air on what felt like I was holding in.

"They s-should mind their own fucking! Business!" My mouth suddenly blurted out.

I immediately closed it with my hand before gasping again "Stop! Filip...haaa!!" I held my head that seems to be splitting apart, I can feel Filip taking over and I can't risk that.

"It's okay... It's fine..."

It's getting worse everyday.

Ever since that time where brother almost fried my brain, the alters have been going haywire. Filip and Perla can't hold them back, especially Scarlet and Cain...

"Are you okay...?"

I jolted from my position and step back to turn around where cosmos was standing behind me.

"C-cosmos..."

He stepped out and looked around.

The empty and quiet plaza was howling in an odd and eerie way.

"If, I somehow made you irritated in any way, I'm sorry, I'm just straightforward most of the time"

I smiled and shake my head, stepping back a little "it's okay, I don't really mind..."

"I do, I came here to learn and I came here to know what I want to know, but I guess I went over the line..."

Athena cooes at me as she nuzzles her head on my cheek, as if to tell me it's okay now.

"It's okay"

"Okay, then... Have fun at your... Swim" he said before walking back in.

Ahh, that's right, cosmos hates the ocean.

"Let's go..." I mumbled and Athena cooed at me.

She nuzzles her face and I giggled "I'm okay Athena... Thank you for getting mad at the stead..."

Weird, I've never felt this easily irritated before, but I wonder why Athena knows...

I guess an animals instinct is strong.

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8 : 30 am (Mesozoic private Beach)

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As the sky becomes blue and the place becomes bright, everyone was so excited for the last day of summer in school.

Joe invited everyone to swim and Tethys allowed us to use his private beach as a place to use, although he couldn't come with us.

Right now, we're in a van with bags at the back and toys to use for the beach.

When we arrived, we were greeted by multiple attendants and lead us to our room to stay in.

Of course, Malaysia and Indonesia couldn't wait and hurriedly went to the beach where the others already are.

Brunei brought a beach umbrella and beach chairs whilst Israel, China, Spain and Mexico were the ones cooking the meat with fire and coal.

Most of them were simply half naked with a swim trunks although Joe and Russia wore a Speedo that gives us a good outline of... Everything.

The anatomy is amazing.

"Aren't you guys gonna swim?" South asked while holding a beach ball and goggles.

North was laying on the beach chair and drinking a coconut through a straw that Brunei gave us.

"No"

I shake my head as well "I'd like to watch you guys swim, I'll swim later"

"Scared of the sun?" He grinned.

"Sort of" I replied.

North scoffed "I'm not"

"As if" South then threw the ball to North causing him to drop the coconut upsidedown on the sand "oops" South teased and took the ball again before running away.

"SOUTH KOREA! GET BACK HERE!" North then grabbed the water gun that's besides him and began chasing after South.

I giggled at the two.

"Lotus! Lotus! Let's swim!" Vietnam came up with Iran and the both of them held my hand, lightly pulling me.

"Sorry, I would like to stay here for a bit" I said.

Vietnam's shoulders drop "why not?"

"Nothing really, but I'd prefer to stay here and watch you guys"

They both look at each other and nodded "okay!" Iran said with a smile and released my hand.

They both waved at me before running towards the water to join the others.

I look over to where J, Arabia, and kazhakstan are.

J was blindfolded while holding a bat whilst the two are behind him, guiding him towards where the watermelon is.

"Left! A little left J!" Kazhakstan yelled.

"No! Right! A little right!" Arabia berates until their words became jumbled and synched that J raised the bat and hit the sand instead.

I smiled before looking over to Egypt making a sand castle with Nepal buried with his head only showing under the sand with a sunglasses, Germany then approached the two holding toys that usually kids use to make a simple sand castle.

"I have a shovel" Germany said.

"I have a Nepal" Egypt argued.

The two glared at each other and the two had a castle making competition.

I laughed when the two were fired up all of a sudden.

"FREEDOM!" I hear Scotland yell.

I look over to where he is and he was sitting on Ireland's shoulders while Ireland was chasing after Australia– who's sitting on NZ's shoulder and the two group were shooting water at each other.

"HAHAHAHHA! HOLY SHIT! Ahhhh!!!!!! Zea!!! Fall back! Fall back!!!" Australia laughed when the continuous firing from Scotland became stronger.

"Don't stop Scotty!!!!! Shoot like you mean ittttt!!!!!!!!" Ireland yelled and Scotland did what he said.

NZ fell and Australia fell as well, still smiling and laughing.

"Here ya go ladybug" Sweden hands me a plate of burger that Mexico made.

"Thank you" I said.

Sweden sat besides me to where North was sitting earlier and wore his sunglasses before leaning down, adjusting the chair more so it'll look like a bed.

"It's hot but relaxing" he mumbled before drifting to sleep.

"Yeah, it is"

"Glad Tethys allowed us to use his private beach"

I nodded before his voice trails off.

I look over to where Mexico was and he was arguing with Poland about something while Poland was holding a burger with a double patty.

I leaned back on my chair and took a bite from my burger before watching them again.

Estonia and Finland were at the water, just at the shallow area.

Finland was holding Estonia's hand as to guide him while they walk.

"I stepped on a shell! There's a shell underneath my feet Finland!" Estonia happily said and Finland bend down to pick it up.

He gave it to Estonia who then roams his hand around it "whoahhhh, amazing"

Their friendship is really something.

Brazil and Greece were somewhere I think.

I know Greece brought a floaty before they both ran off to the water.

"Whew! That's refreshing!" Joe said as he ran towards me, his body was drenched and it was glimmering from the sunlight.

"Joe, you're really handsome right now" I said.

He flinched and was caught off guard "e-eh... Really?" He said

before looking away and turning red.

"Joe, you're turning red, maybe you should take a res--"

"I'm gonna swim moreee!!!!!!" He yelled and ran back.

I wonder what happened? Was I too forward?

Suddenly, Sweden removed his sunglasses and was laughing "you're such a natural, ladybug" he said.

"Natural?"

He sit up and nodded "you're able to sway someone with such honest words"

"Really? Do you sway too?" I asked, taking another bite from the burger.

"Well, sometimes, but it really depends"

I hummed in response when suddenly, J walked up to us all covered in something red all over his body and face.

Same goes for Arabia and kazhakstan.

"Watermelon!" He grins before handing it out to us.

"What happened?" Sweden asked and hesitantly accepted the watermelon that looked like it was smashed.

Arabia laughed and wrapped an arm around J from behind "he smashed the watermelon with a bat"

Kazhakstan showed us the bat "and it was awesome..." He mumbled with a sparkle in his eyes.

"We can see that... But why?"

"When in Rome, do what the Romans do" Arabia replied.

"That doesn't make sen--"

"Alright! Let's do another one!!!!" Kazhakstan declared and they followed after him with a cheer.

"Andddddd... they're gone" Sweden said and took a bite from the smashed watermelon "but it taste good"

I took a bite as well and hummed in delight by how sweet it was.

"Sweden look! Triple burger!!!!" Poland came up to us holding a three layer patty burger that's oozing with ketchup and mayonnaise.

"Did Mexico do that?" I asked.

Poland nodded "yep!!!" He jumped and sat besides Sweden and happily ate his burger "although we had to argue a bit about it"

"Philipia" Spain called "here's a barbeque" he said and gave me three on my plate.

I beamed and smiled "thank you Spain!~" I said.

Spain, Sweden and Poland all looked taken aback.

Ah, was it uncommon to be this happy to receive a barbeque?

"Let's go give her more!!!!" Sweden and Spain suddenly became fired up, walking back to where they were cooking.

Poland pats my head "you're so cute, I didn't know barbeque can make you that happy"

I chuckled and took a bite "it's been a long time since I've last eaten one"

Poland laughed and continued eating his burger.

The day continued and everyone were really full of energy, although some of our friends didn't come like Laos, cosmos, Ukraine, Canada, France and Singapore.

But at least, it was still fun since some of our classmates and schoolmates came.

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10 : 30 pm

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When night came, everyone went back to our own hut, though I was given my own so I was alone.

Our huts were still besides each other so I can hear their muffled voices and conversations.

Scrolling through my phone, J gave me an account for autogram so I was able to see what everyone posted.

I laughed when most of them were funny and some were a little extra on their photography.

When I turned my phone off, I placed it on the lamp desk and looked outside my window.

The beach was now empty, the ocean was dark yet the sound of the shore that splashes was still loud.

Turning to my heel, I wore my sandal and jacket before going out.

Walking by the sand, my feet would sink a little with every step I would take.

The breeze was endless but it doesn't make me feel cold.

I feel relax, I feel at peace.

I walked a little more until I saw someone not far from the shore.

"Cosmos?" I called and he turn to my direction, though he was wearing his helmet.

"Hello, shooting star"

"How did you get here?"

"Helicopter" he points towards the helicopter that's parked not far from us.

"Oh"

He nodded before facing the dark water again "it's scary" he mumbled.

I turn to the water as well "not really, if you're used to it, it won't be scary"

"I don't know... The sea is the only thing I'm scared to venture, but I can tell how beautiful it is"

I nodded "it is..." and looked at cosmos again.

I can't read what expression he's making behind that helmet, I can't tell what he's thinking.

Cosmos may be the most oddest person you'll ever meet, but if you try to understand him on a 3rd perspective, he's also like us leaders, he's also a normal person who just lack the experience.

I bend down and removed the strap of my sandals, placing them neatly on the sand.

"What are you doing?"

I removed my jacket and folded it, placing it on top of my sandal as well.

"I'll show you something amazing, something that'll make you change your mind about the ocean"

I can tell he was confused but I held out my hand to him.

"Will you entrust me your everything even for a moment?" I asked.

He stood there, motionless, the air blowing his shirt and jacket.

But he looked down at my hand and backs at me again before

removing something on the back of his neck.

The helmet released a thick smoke that was easily blown away, it hissed like the same sound you hear when you open a can of soda, before he lift it and placed the helmet down on the sand.

His mismatched violet and silver eyes are more vibrant today.

"Okay" he said and held my hand.

I smiled and pulled him towards the water that's pitch black.

"You know why when a territory of a leader gets taken, their marks would disappear as well?"

"No"

Pulling him even more, never stopping even if the water already reached to our chest area.

"The reason why it disappears is because our body is blessed and named after the land itself, we country leaders are the embodiment of the ground, the water, the trees, the very air that surrounds it"

I held his other hand and pulled him even more, this time, we were tiptoeing.

"Shooting star, I don't think I can go even further--"

"And I'll show you proof..." I cut him off.

"Proof?"

I nodded "proof that the blood in our veins that carry the marks, consist the blood of the land"

He swallowed hard but nodded, his body swaying left and right from the current of the waves.

"How long can you hold your breath?" I asked.

"I can hold it in for a few minutes, I got used to it since there's not much oxygen in space"

"Good"

I inhaled and exhaled deeply and cosmos followed, before we submerged under water.

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The water was cold, it was strong and there's no sense of gravity underneath.

My body was heavy, my feet feels like it'll be swept if I wasn't careful, so I was holding onto her hand really tight.

But when we both submerged under water.

I felt shooting star press her forehead against mine.

Slowly opening my eyes.

What greeted me almost took my breath away.

Her body was showing her marks, under this dark water, her marks were glowing, as if she was the light here, as if she was the only day of light here....

But that didn't end, suddenly, the water, the sand underneath us, the corals, the fishes; they were all glowing– showing hidden marks on them, following what she was doing.

One by one, the marks keeps spreading.

Until the whole place was engulfed with its light that it feels like I was in heaven.

She opened her eyes to look at me.

Yellow and amber, on a closer look, it feels like there was hidden

jewels behind it.

It was really enchanting that it feels like I'm melting.

My heart was beating really fast, my brain refused to react immediately since I was in a trance like moment.

It was really... amazing.

It didn't take long for us to swim back up since we were sinking and getting farther from the surface.

"Haaa!" She gasped for air.

And when we got back the surface, the water was also showing marks, and they all look like they were coming from her, they all look like they were connected from her.

The marks looked like they were moving, the symbols on it changing and switching...

"This is..."

"Markings, it's a symbol that you're a country leader and that the land acknowledge you as their master...." She said.

Not long before she hides her marks and the glow around us slowly dissipates.

"Let's go back?" She asked and we swam back to shore.

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"So? How was it--"

I didn't reply her when my body suddenly moved on it's own to hug her.

Her drenched body was pressing against my drenched body.

I don't know why but, my heart feels like it'll explode by something

overflowing.

"Did I perhaps scare you?" She asked.

I shake my head and bury my face on her shoulder "it's just, it feels like I might explode"

She smells like mint and the sea.

She giggled and hugged me back "nature is beautiful, isn't it..."

"Yeah..."

I separate myself from her and stare at her eyes.

I didn't even realized just how amazing it looks.

"Thank you, for showing me..."

She smiled and nodded "I'm glad too"

Suddenly, Brunei's voice called out to her not far from us. She turn her head towards it and turn to face me again...

"It's okay" I said "I simply came here to check what it was anyways..."

She nodded and took her jacket and sandals on the sand before walking back to the opposite direction.

Her hand slips away from mine and I suddenly started to feel dreadful.

Weird...

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I waved at Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia who were outside their huts.

"Philip! What in the world?!" Brunei exclaimed and ran down the steps and towards me, accompanied by Malaysia and Indonesia behind him.

"Sorry, I went for a swim" I said and chuckled.

"It wasn't scary?" Indonesia asked who placed a towel on top of my head and examined the dark waters.

"Nope" I replied.

"Remember what Australia said when Joe did a skinny dipping at night?" Malaysia snickered and Indonesia laughed.

Brunei sighed and started drying off my face "whatever it was, it is dangerous! What if you got carried by the sea? Then you would've be--"

"Shooting star!!!!"

We all turn towards the source of the voice.

It was cosmos, running towards us without his helmet.

"Is that cosmos?" Malaysia solicit.

I nodded in reply.

He stop not far from us but he was breathing really heavily.

"Cosmos! Why didn't you tell us you were her--"

Indonesia's sentence was cut off when cosmos yelled.

"Shooting star! If... If I can have you, will I be able to see even more beautiful? Something bewitching? Enthralling? Captivating?" He asked with such curious and demanding eyes.

"Well... I don't know...?"

I looked up at the sky when there was stars that seems to fall again and again, raining like a thousand jewels.

"Whoahhhh! Meteor shower!" Malaysia joyously exclaimed while jumping, so did Indonesia.

"What is happening?" Brunei asked while watching the night sky raining with stars.

"Shooting star!... No– philipia!"

I was a little caught off guard when he said my name with a serious tone.

"Y-yes?"

"If you, a country leader is one with the land, the waters, the trees, the very nature itself" he proclaimed "then I, a planet leader, I'm one with the sky, I'm one with the galaxy, and right now– I don't know what I'm feeling"

Cosmos held his chest when his mismatched, galaxy like eyes produced tears.

"It feels like I'll go nuts, when your hand suddenly slips off from mine, it felt like I was all alone in this world..."

Brunei then steps infront of me and held my hand "what are you implying exactly, cosmos?"

He bite his lower lip and took a step closer "I want to have you..." He declared before his marks started to show "the sky will bow to you, the stars will be within your palms, the planets will dance for you... I, cosmos, The promised star, hereby declare to be in line to philipia, pearl of the orient seas... and that may the heavens guide me within"

Suddenly, new marks started to appear around his face and glowed around his eyes.

"Tsk..."

"I hope you'll choose me..."

What is happening, did cosmos just went in line for me?

"I..."

I look away and look back to Malaysia and Indonesia.

They look at me worriedly while Brunei looked irritated.

"If it's okay, I'd want to do a soul collision if possible"

"No!" I yelled which taken them aback "just please...don't, please give me time to think..."

He looked at me and smiled, and it was the first time we saw him make such a warm expression.

Cosmos nodded.

I turn to my heel and held Malaysia and Indonesia's hand "I wanna go back..."

They both nodded and held my hand, leading me back to my room.

"Shooting star..."

"Let's talk first, planet leader cosmos..." Brunei stops him and I walked even faster.

Why?

I simply showed him something that any country leader do.

I simply showed him that nature isn't scary as it seems.

I sat on my bed and shrink between my shoulders.

Malaysia kneeled down to my height and pat my head "are you okay? You're not pressured or anything, right?" He asked.

I bite my lower lip when fat tears starts to fall, I wasn't able to hold them back...

"Malaysia..." I sobbed.

"Hug?"

I nodded and I got down on the floor to hug Malaysia, crying on his shoulder.

For some reason, I feel much more comfortable around them, I feel more at ease with them...

Indonesia kneeled besides us and rub circles on my back "ahhh, there there... It's okay, we know how many people are in line for you now but, it was their decision, so don't be pressured..."

I sobbed even louder and held Malaysia's shirt tightly.

I really need a break...

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I narrowed my eyes at the phone when I read the message sent by '*him*'

"Another one again huh..." I mumbled before closing it and placing it back on my desk.

I turn to the woman who is stabbed around her shoulders and arms on the wall.

"Haaa.... I better clean up, philipia is coming home..."

I leaned back and aimed my gun at the woman's head.

She's still alive, she's just really weak since I stabbed her multiple times on her back.

"Just a few more years.... Until everything can be complete..."

Bang!

_____

< < < End of Chapter 11 : Astrophile.

> > > Coming Chapter 12 : Mutterseelenallein.

_____

Fact 1 : Canada had a fever, that's why he couldn't go and swim.

Fact 2 : Gondwanda's IQ is 298 and Laurasia's IQ is 292.

*Fact 3 : philipia only has one **real** fated pair.*

Fact 4 : Joe is slowly starting to be aware.

Fact 5 : Spanish empire will be attending on fall.

Fact 6 : Mrs. France once had a miscarriage.

Fact 7 : little pup is now a father of 5

Fact 8 : Greg is single (again)

Fact 9 : Nepal deeply cares for Egypt and philipia

Fact 10 : You're worthy than a billion diamonds.

_____

[I am so sorry that it's almost been a month]

[It's just been stressing both at house and outside]

[And I couldn't really use my phone either, I can check but I can barely use social media or even watch YouTube]

[All I've been doing these days is typing on my laptop on Microsoft for God knows how long for something that I've been revising many many times omg wkbdkahcbjsjdbjsncn ....]

[*Inhale intensifies* anywaysssssss ..... I'm sorry again and I'll do my best to update next week ^^]

[As always hope you enjoyed it]

[Much love~~]

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Chapter ----

[image]

It wasn't long when the burning sensation cursed through the body.

It melts the inside, *it* burns the throat, *it* mutes the scream, and *it* squeezes the heart.

Nerves in the body soon stopped, the sight became blurred, and the lungs refused to take air.

They're bodies crumble down to the floor– and to the ground.

Wherever they are, they are experiencing something excruciating, painful, and hellish of a pain that one cannot fathom or even begin to understand.

It feels like every air they breath is pins, every word they try to make out is knives carving their vocal cords.

It was truly, a day, that multiple people, fell down all at the same time and **felt**; what one just felt.

Ahhh, even the sky is crying.

Two of which is now but an emotionless being.

To *give up what's yours* to have *what they have.*

They're nothing but *emotionless* dolls now.

But one cannot blame these two beings, for their *feelings* is unfathomable.

This is nothing compared to what they've felt throughout the *decades*.

One felt *empty* whilst one felt *beaten*.

But the rest, they continue to suffer *it*.

That unexplainable hellish pain.

Heck– hell is nothing compared to what *it* is.

But soon, that pain subsided.

That pain is now a *reminder*.

A reminder that...

One has now *perished*.

One has now... *Left* the world.

And the world that it left, is now grieving and mourning.

For the *gift* that the world gave, was damned.

If only...

If only the *two* didn't do what they did.

Then none of this would've happened.

Apologies isn't accepted...

Not to *them* at least...

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[I'll be publishing unknown chapters every 2 weeks from now on]

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Chapter 12 : Mutterseelenallein

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy~]

_____

"ahh, there's my ray of sun~ hello darling"

I look back to the person behind me.

For some reason, she's tall– or maybe I'm just really small right now.

"What are you doing here?" She asked and crouched down.

"Who?" My lips moved on its own; and asked.

She pushed aside the yellow veil over her hat and smiled at me "it's me~ boo!"

It didn't surprised me but I still giggled "lola~!" I happily called.

"Are you playing a game with your brothers?"

I nodded "yes, please don't tell them I'm here"

She laughed softly– much like mama "I won't~ instead, I'll help you find the perfect spot"

She took my hand and wore the veil once again "make sure not to tell your brothers of our secret hideaway"

I nodded and followed after her.

Her soft hands that holds mine, the tall figure before me shine so bright.

The wind pass by us and blew her veil which she immediately held down to prevent being seen.

"Pretty" I unconsciously said yet she turn to me and smiled.

"Of course I am, but you're prettier, your mismatched eyes are really rare"

I held my right eye and looked at her again "but Lola's eyes are like the sun with diamonds inside"

She giggled "really? I guess it just runs in the blood darling"

"Runs in the blood?"

She nodded "you'll understand soon, but first, let's climbed this gigantic tree and we'll sit at the top- with that, your bothers won't find you for a day"

I beamed and ran up to the tree and started climbing on it "be careful darling, don't be scared, I'm right behind you"

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I yawned and stretch my hands behind me after I woke up from a deep yet short nap.

"Miss, you're awake"

I look ahead to where I was sitting from and saw Mark, standing there with little pup besides him.

"Sorry, I fell asleep" I said and chuckled, slowly standing up and dusting my shorts.

Little pup ran up to me and I pet him on the head, I giggled and he barked.

"It's okay miss, after the workload last night, you must've been tired"

I nodded "yes, the paperworks were tiring, I can't imagine doing it everyday, yet brother does it everyday"

"Indeed he does"

I picked up my phone and earphones on the ground to where I was laying, before walking besides Mark back to the mansion.

"Looks like you had a good dream" he spoke.

"Hmm? Oh, I guess I did? I mean, I can't really remember much but, I think I dreamt of Lola"

Mark looked interested for a second "really? It must've been a long time since their deaths"

"I can't remember how Lola died though"

He shakes his head "it was simply a beautiful death, miss"

"A beautiful death?"

He nodded "one day she just stopped breathing yet she has a smile on her lips on her deathbed"

I can't really remember much about my grandma.

All I know was that she was an eccentric and peculiar woman.

And like mama, she has undeniable beauty that the men in our country would still court her, knowing full well she was already married.

But I can remember a time where grandpa never really cared since she's head over heels for him.

Grandma was hopelessly in love with grandpa that he didn't really mind the men courting her.

But it was such a long time I can barely remember her face yet...

Why did I dreamt of her now?

"Oh by the way, where's brother?" I asked as we entered back at the mansion.

"He's– well..."

I shake my head since I'm already aware where he is "it's okay, I think I know where he is now" I smiled.

Mark nodded and was about to leave but he stopped and turn back to me again "oh, and miss?" He called.

"Yes?"

"I found an old box that belonged to master Kati"

"Papa's belongings? Where?"

"In the old hut, miss"

"Okay, I'll go and see it"

The old hut, or our old house.

Brother didn't want to destroy it like it was meant to be when the mansion was being built.

So instead of being destroyed, brother had it stayed in its place.

And deep in this mansion, there is a door that leads to a huge room where the old house is placed.

Basically, there's a house inside the house.

The only people allowed in is the trusted servants, Mark, my brother and me, anyone who dares to enter here are fired or worse: *killed*.

I unlocked the door with the key and closed it behind me.

In this spacious yet medium sized room, there's a hut at the middle, high ceilings with fluorescent lights to keep the indoor garden healthy and growing.

It's almost like you entered a field of flowers and grass with an of hut resting at the middle.

Brother wanted to keep it as it was when we left it.

The hut was surrounded by flowers.

And he did kept it that way, even if it's inside the mansion.

I unlocked the door and entered inside, the smell of nostalgia, the old wood, the familiar creaks, and that comforting sense of touch.

It was a small one story hut with three rooms, one is for our parents, one is for us siblings and one is the room where papa usually take meetings.

I went ahead and opens the door to their room and there, the bed that was fixed and looked exactly how it was still stayed.

The mosquito net was hanging on the ceiling that drapes down to their bed.

And at the middle of it is where the box that Manila stated earlier.

"Excuse me, I'll be invading inside papa, mama" I said and picked up the old looking box that was heavier than I thought.

"Hmm..."

I placed it on my lap and examined it.

It was a box that was carved with beautiful patterns, it was varnished– I can tell, and it had an odd looking puzzle on the top that connects to the lock.

"Hmmm... There must be something very important inside here" I muttered and leaned it near my ear as I shake it lightly.

I can hear something small and something fluttering inside.

Paper? Keys? Metal?

I'm curious, maybe I can bring this to me in Pangaea and ask help

with my friends.

I'll be going back in two days anyways.

I stood up and carried the box on my side and walked out of the hut and room after returning it to the way it was.

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"Oh, brother" I called when I saw him walking on the other hall.

He slowly turned towards me and his gloomy expression brightened "philipia" he smiled and walked towards me.

"What is that?" He asked and leaned on the hallway window wall.

"Ah, Mark said he found this old box that belonged to papa, I thought it looked interesting"

"Hm" he said and took it, examining it "it's a puzzle for the lock"

I nodded "I didn't even know papa had this"

"Well, papa had many secrets that he left untold and carried in his grave" brother gave it back.

"Really? All I can remember with papa was our happy moments"

He hummed in response, looking out the window with a dark color under his eyes "it's better if that's how you remember it, rather than the bad times..."

I nodded and agreed, that time where papa was killed almost felt like the world was endin--

"I'm sorry Mahal..."

"Ngh..."

Brother looked over my way "are you okay?"

I nodded while holding my head that suddenly throbbed "I'm okay, I just felt dizzy for a second"

Brother sighed and looked at me worriedly "I'll ask Mark for your headaches" he said and started caressing my left cheek.

"Brother?" I asked when his mismatched eyes stared at mine.

"This summer vacation was short, and after two days you'll be gone again..."

I smiled at him and held his hand on my cheek "I'll be back again next year"

"Next year, huh..." He muttered and hugged me, placing his chin on my head "and after that year, I'll start the plan to clean the rats"

Bathump.

My heart jumped, not from something good, but from something bad.

A shiver ran down my back but I have to hold it in, I have to keep my composure otherwise he'll see through me...

"You're tense right now, you okay?"

He was about to look at me but I hugged him back and even tighter, hiding my fearful expression on his beating chest.

"Philipia?..."

"Y-you're right brother, after next year, we'll be together, and everything will go the way you planned it"

I feel him soften up and hugged me back "yes, that's right, together–" he leaned down to my ear and whispered "forever" and kissed my earlobe.

I shuddered when he suddenly licked it and chuckled.

While brother was leaned down to my height, I saw a black spot

around his collarbone and neck.

"Uhm, brother? What's this?" I asked and pointed it.

Oh no is this an allergy reaction?

He looks down and groaned when he saw it "damn, she must've enjoyed it"

I grinned, the tension from just now subsiding "is it mosquito? Allergy?"

He raised a brow and shake his head "no, it's not, it's a symbol of someone trying to mark me as theirs"

"You can mark someone like that?"

He grinned and pulled my hand "I'll teach you how, I want you to mark me"

[If this part will disturb or make you uncomfortable in any way, feel free to skip ^^]

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⚠ **Incest alert!** ⚠

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Brother pulled me to his room, he closed the door behind him and took the box I had earlier from my hands and placed it on his desk.

He proceeds to remove his polo and let it fall on the floor.

I've always admired brother's fit body but I noticed there were multiple black spot like the one at his neck all over his stomach and chest.

"So it's a mosquito after all?" I asked worriedly.

"Like I said, someone was trying to mark me"

Mark him?

"Want to know how? Philipia?"

I nodded, I am quite curious how they can mark brother.

"Here" he takes his right arm and started sucking on it and showed me the same black and violet color that was all over his chest– though, the one he made was much darker.

"I see, would you like me to give you one brother?"

He smirked and nodded, spreading his arms "put one on every spot you see"

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Philipia leaned on my neck, her warm breath tickled and it made me shiver in pleasure.

I've always wanted her to do this to me, and to think I'm able to do it now without her knowing what it means.

Just makes me so excited...

She started sucking on my neck and I moaned quietly, biting my lower lip before my hand held her small waist.

"Haaa..."

As she separates herself, a string of saliva still connects from her lips to my neck.

That was so hot.

She licked her lips and continued on my collar bone.

She had a hard time since putting a hickie on a collarbone is really tough with the bone in the way, but she slightly used her teeth and it just gave me that pleasurable sting.

She continued and did it on my chest, my rib area, and two on my stomach.

I was breathing heavily, I can see smokes of it from this dim room...

My body is on fire, every touch she does on me sends electricity.

"Brother, there's one over here" she points the one on my abdomen.

Shit, she'll notice the bulge.

"I'm so...horny..." I muttered through gritted teeth while staring lustfully on her.

She tilts her head to the side "I couldn't hear it brother" she leans close and I shake my head in response.

Pulling my pants down a little to show her the hickie the girl I just slept with– placed.

"Do it..."

It was more of a lustful demand.

But she happily agreed and leaned close to it before sucking that area.

I bend a little from the pleasure that she just gave.

"Nghn..!"

She immediately separate herself out of worry "ah! I'm sorry, did it hurt?"

Without thinking, I pushed her down on the bed and turned her on her stomach "have you ever touched yourself... Philipia?"

She was still clueless.

"Touch myself? In what way brother?"

She isn't even questioning why I pushed her down– I've taught her well...

"Yeah... Touching yourself to satisfy your lust" I whispered in her ear.

I felt her shudder.

"Oh that? No I haven't..."

I chuckled "then, should I teach you?"

"Teach me? It's okay i--"

Suddenly, she started groaning while holding her head.

"Philipia?" I called when she suddenly stopped.

"My, my, my"

Her voice suddenly turned flirtatious before facing me, wrapping their legs around my hips, pulling me and pressing me to her.

I bite my lower lip since I'm still hard down there "philipia, what are you..."

I narrowed my eyes when her demeanor and expression changed.

Biting her lower lip and looking at me with such anticipation, I knew immediately this isn't philipia.

This isn't my sister.

"Who are you?" I sternly asked.

She giggled "the one and only mauve"

I scoff and removed her legs from me "I see, then I'm martial"

"Awww, now that I've switched you won't even teach me how to touch myself?" She giggled.

I pushed myself from her and stood up, walking to my desk and leaned on it "this is troublesome, I don't like the vibe you give"

She bites her lower lip before spreading her legs in a teasing way.

If it was philipia...

I would've devoured her.

But, no, this isn't her, and it's a turn off.

"That is fine~ as long as you won't touch philipia, that's fine, that is my job"

I see, an alter or a personality that protects the host's body from sexual activity; a sexual alter.

I may have to remove this bitch from philipia.

"I see" I said and sighed "well, now that you're here, you're free to leave with philipia's body"

She grins and hopped off the bed "okayy~~ but don't worry, she won't remember a thing on what dirty stuff you made her do~"

I glared at her "I don't care if she remembers or not"

"What a boring person~" she said and took the box that philipia was carrying "well then 'big bro-ther~ see ya around~"

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I blinked a few times when I realized I've been standing on the same hall I was at earlier.

Weird, I'm sure I was with brother, but...

Was I day dreaming?

"Hmmmmm..."

I tried thinking about it but my head is somehow throbbing if I tried...

"I can't wrap my head around it..." I groaned and decided to just brush it off and head to my room.

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Friday [6 : 45 am - Philippine, landing and departing main area]

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"What a short summer vacation that was"

Mark chuckled "we will miss you" he said.

I smiled "so do I"

I watched as some helpers load all the baggages I have to the helicopter.

I look over at the distant and saw brother walking towards our way with a rather messy appearance, I can tell he came here in a hurry.

"Why didn't you wake me?" He glared at me.

I nervously chuckled "that's because brother haven't had any good sleep these days"

"Philipia, I'm not a kid, you could've woke me up to see you off, even that you won't let me too?" His voice trails off.

Me and mark tilts our head to the side "*too?* was there something

else I wouldn't let you have?" I asked.

He cleared his throat and shake his head "no, forget about it, but next time you do this I won't forgive you"

I laughed and nodded "okay"

After a few moments, the pilot who will operate the helicopter arrived and bowed at us.

"Well, I guess I'll be going now" I said and he hopped in the helicopter.

I faced both mark and brother; giving them a hug, they hugged me back before I released them both and step in the vehicle.

"I'll be looking forward to your next report, philipia" brother said in a serious tone with a smile on his face.

For a second, it gave me a shiver on my back but I held it in and smiled back "yes, brother"

With that, mark closed the door by slamming it to the side before I wore the headset.

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10 : 30 am [Pangaea student landing area]

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When one of a Pangaean staff (from the school) opened the door for me, I step out and I was greeted by a strong wind and the familiar ending of the summer in pangaea.

It's only been a few weeks but, I somehow missed the place.

"Thank you, sir" I said to the person who aid me.

As they unloaded my things, I look around and noticed that there were a bunch of helicopters, ships and anything that can be used as a vehicle to arrive in Pangaea.

There were many students and they all seemed happy to see each other again.

"The unloading is finished country leader, we are delighted to have you back in Pangaea again" the three men who helped me unload my luggages bowed at me.

I bowed at them as well "so do I" I said and saw one of them pushing a trolley cart (one you would usually see in hotels and used by bellboys) with my luggages on it.

"Ah! Please, I insist, I can do it" I said.

He seemed hesitant but his friend held his shoulder and nodded.

He nodded as well and stepped back.

I bowed at them once again and went on my way.

I can't bother them since there are many more who needed their help, and I also feel bad too– also, most of these things were all packed by mark.

And as always, he always make me bring a lot, I haven't even opened the others that he made me bring before.

I sighed but I continued pushing the trolley.

It's lighter than I thought.

As I arrived at the dorm area, I see the familiar tall structures and the dorm plaza that was somewhat improved and bigger than before.

I pushed my trolley and some helpers would ask to help me but, I'd rather do it.

"I lost it"

I perked up when I hear one student who seemed to be in a panic state.

"You not have it!?" He grabbed the person besides him.

"I ain't got nuttin' dude!"

I wonder what's wrong.

"Ahhhhhh, we be trouble! We be so trouble! Trouble only gives trouble!!!"

"Relax laska, is there in'thang we need?"

Laska? Does he mean Alaska? Could they be a state?

They seemed to be in trouble.

I stop my trolley and approached the two "hello, good morning"

They both turn to me and flinched, their body straightened and stepped back.

"F-f-f-f-f-f-female l-l-l-l-l-leader?!"

"H-hello, female leader"

I blinked a few times "I saw you both having trouble, if there's anything I can help? I'm willing to lend a hand"

"Laska" he nudges the man (Alaska) and he stepped forward.

"U-uhm! Ma-ma'am! We're sorry! But we're okay he-here"

I blinked a few times and nodded, but I noticed that their luggages had a number and building name.

They must've lost the paper for their designated dorm.

"Okay, but, if you're looking for building 3 it's over there" I point and pushed my trolley again "see you, oh and I'm philipia"

"A-a-alaska! And this is my friend Texas"

I nodded "alright, see you around Alaska and Texas"

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Building 1

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The elevator door opens after the sound and I stepped out after pushing the trolley.

As I turn to the right at the hall, I accidentally bumped into someone, causing one bag to fall.

"Ah! I'm sorry!" I peeked at the side to see who it was.

They bend down to pick my bag up and put it back on the trolley.

"It's okay" they smiled.

If I'm not mistaken this is Iceland, I've seen him once on a while so we aren't that close.

"I'm really sorry"

This is also the first time we talked...

He shakes his head and smiled "it was me who isn't looking"

"Uhm, but still, I'm sorry and thank you"

He nodded and went inside the elevator.

The door closed and I bowed slightly as an apology.

This is the first conversation I had with Iceland.

But just now, I can't grasp that feeling that his smile was somehow odd.

As if it was forced...?

I shake the thought away and continued.

There's no point anyways, I have to hurry back so that I can cook food for everyone when they arrive.

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"Whew"

I stared at the food I cooked that filled the table.

I'm not sure if it's not enough or did I made too much?

Malaysia loves these types of food, Indonesia too, Germany likes these and these and these...

Brunei hates these with that so I added this and that, Israel, I have to keep his beautiful anatomy, I mustn't let his curves disappear, also, he gains weight easily so I'll make more leafy and healthy food...

"Ah, I really did made too much" I chuckled to myself.

I removed the apron and hanged it, glancing over to the clock, it was already noon yet they're still not here, no messages either.

I've already arranged my things and washed my autumn uniform too.

I should take a stroll.

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I went outside after covering the foods that I made, looking around, there were still many students that just arrived.

I wonder how those two states are doing?

"Oh, philipia?"

I look back to where Arabia was and he waved at me; I waved back and approached him.

"Hello Arabia"

He smiled "why are you walking out alone? Your friends still not here?" He asked.

I nodded "I think they'll arrive a little later on"

"Hmmm, well, how about you hang out with me I'm on a walk as well"

"Okay" I beamed and walked besides Arabia.

We got to the plaza when suddenly, someone bumped into me "ah! I'm sorry!" I said.

The person looked at me timidly and frightened before mumbling "sorry..." And ran the opposite direction.

"That was... Denmark?" Arabia spoke.

"I guess they can still accept new batches of students every season"

"Yeah, they do– oh by the way" Arabia wraps an arm around my neck and walked towards the fountain at the plaza.

"Po?"

"*Po*? What does that mean?"

I gasped softly "oh, sorry, it was out of habit meant *yes*?"

He chuckled "I wasn't able to ask you this, but did cosmos went in line for you?"

I blinked a few times and shrink between my shoulder "ah, yes, he did..." My voice trails off.

He hissed "you didn't like him?"

"No! It's not like I hate him, it's just... I can't respond to his feelings or to any of their feelings"

"I see... Well, in your case, it's understandable, you must've been overwhelmed"

I nodded "yeah I w--"

"Magandang hapon~!"

Suddenly, Kazhakstan came up behind Arabia and wrapped an arm around him.

Arabia raised a brow "magendang?"

"Hahaha~! It's sunstar's language, it means good afternoon"

I smiled "magandang hapon din, Kazhakstan"

He grinned and pats my head "anyways, it's nice to see you guys again after that short summer vacation"

"Hahaha, nice to see you as well" Arabia chuckled, Kazhakstan then sat down on the fountain.

"What were you guys talking about? The newcomers couldn't help but talk about two leaders talking by the fountain and that they were shining"

Me and Arabia glanced at each other "shining?" Arabia asked.

"You know how common folks see famous and top tier people besides each other?"

Arabia nods.

"That's what they meant you guys were shining and it got me curious, but to think it's just you two" he laughed.

I giggled and sat besides Kazhakstan.

"So? Care to share the gossip?"

"Gossip?"

Arabia sighs "it's not really a gossip, but more of a fact; it's about cosmos--"

"Oh!" Kazhakstan cuts him off "I heard of it from Singapore, when him, germany and Russia were out that day, they saw cosmos with Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and you by the beach"

"They saw us?"

He nodded "they really couldn't understand what was happening other than cosmos's marks starts to appear and he went in line for you"

I shrink between my shoulders "I see... No wonder"

Kazhakstan laughed and pats my back "what did you do to make him fall for you anyways?"

I shake my head in response "I didn't really do anything other than show him what any leader can do"

"Then what did you do?" Arabia asked.

"I simply showed him the land markings"

Arabia and Kazhakstan looked confused for a second "land markings?" Arabia questions.

I nodded "you know how every leader does? When the lands acknowledge you as their master"

Kazhakstan blinked a few times "you mean, the land here? In Pangaea? At that beach? They acknowledge your markings and presence?"

Weird, do they not do it?

"Yes, I mean, as long as you're a leader any land acknowledges you as their master right?"

Kazhakstan and Arabia looked at each other rather perplexed "wait, no that's not how it--"

"Philipiaaaa!!!!!"

Suddenly, Malaysia called from afar.

I beamed and waved at them "ah, I guess I have to go now, thanks for accompanying me Kazhakstan, Arabia" I smiled and ran up to Malaysia and Indonesia.

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"Hey"

Kazhakstan called while our gaze were focused on philipia's back as she ran to her friends.

"Land markings can only work on your own land..." I said.

He nodded in response "but pangaea's land acknowledged her..."

Land markings can only work on your land or any land you have conquered, but since conquering lands in this generation is now banned and could lead to war.

It was never really used anymore.

And it's also the reason why some parts of your marks disappear whenever your land is stolen and taken... Because that land takes a part of it from you...

But when philipia said that it works on every land on every leader just tells us she was taught wrong...

Or maybe she isn't the only one?

Could her brothers be the same? To the point they think it's already common sense and it's normal for them?

I should really ask him when there's a time...

Because the fact that every land acknowledges her as their master can only mean one thing...

"Hmmm..."

"You think of the same thing?" Kazhakstan grinned at me.

"Of course..."

Philipia, you may not be who you think you are.

Too many secrets are shrouded in mystery.

Kazhakstan stood up and walked on the opposite direction "well, tell me if you found out anything yet"

I hummed in response and perked up when I hear two students talking as they walk pass me.

"You saw him didn't you?" One of them said while looking frightened.

"Yeah, that guy is terrifying... I can't believe Spanish empire is here too"

I stop and look back to the two students that walked pass me.

"Spanish empire... This could be bad" I muttered.

"It is indeed"

I jolted and swiftly turn around to the person behind me.

"You're..."

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Malaysia and Indonesia beamed when as they ate the food I made earlier.

"Ahhhh~ I missed your cooking so much!"

Indonesia nodded in agreement "it's only a short summer vacation but it felt like forever"

I giggled and poured them a glass of juice "please eat slowly, you'll chok--"

"Gahh! Khaahhhkkk!! W-water!" Malaysia held his throat and punches his chest.

I hurriedly gave him the juice I just poured and he chug it all down.

"I told you" I said and wiped his mouth with a clean cloth.

Malaysia chuckled "sorry, it's just, I couldn't really eat breakfast this morning since I was too excited"

"He meant to say, he was so excited to go back to school he couldn't sleep that's why he overslept and couldn't eat breakfast"

Malaysia groans and ate even more "hmp!"

I giggled "but still, eat slowly"

All of a sudden, the door burst open.

"wha!–" Malaysia exclaimed almost dropping his spoon with rice on it "hey! What's the big id-- oh, Germany!"

Germany stood there with a rather serious look, his hand on the door and the other holds his luggage, his eyes scanned the room before it landed on to me.

I flinched when he glinted at me.

Stomping his way inside, he dropped his luggage and squeezed me into a tight hug.

"H-hnm!" It caught me by surprise so I was still processing what was happening.

He nuzzles his face on my right neck and inhaled deeply "mnhn... " Germany mumbled something in his language before releasing me.

"Goddess, is this not a dream anymore? Are you really real now? I'm not hallucinating right? Righttt!?" he shakes me while holding on my shoulder.

"Y-yes, it's real" I replied, feelings little dizzy.

Germany sighs in relief "I thought I was dreaming again, goddess... I missed you so much!" He sobbed and fell on his knees while hugging my waist "please let me stay like this for the next 10 hours!"

"10 h-hours?!" I exclaimed.

Indonesia snorted "Germany! Eat first! Philipia made it!"

He stood up almost instantly and removed his trench coat "I shall eat" he said in a serious tone before sitting down and prayed.

Germany is still Germany, I'm glad.

But that was so sudden it surprised me.

"Coming in~ oh, so this is where the smell came from"

Israel then came next, he placed his luggage on the sofa and took a seat as well "I'm famished so I'm gonna eat first"

"What a subtle entrance, Israel"

"Does my entrance have to be grand?"

Malaysia laughed "nahhh, I don't want my food to be spoiled"

It wasn't long when Brunei arrived as well "I'm gonna eat as well..."

He groaned and dropped the bags he carried than what he had when leaving.

"Hahahah! I almost ate everything Brunei!" Malaysia teased to which Brunei glared at him.

This almost feels like we're all moving in to the academy.

But that thought seems nice.

Moving in to this place where everyone is together with no boundaries to block us.

I wish that fantasy could exist.

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6 : 30 pm

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"Oh yeah, which reminds me" Malaysia spoke as he rolled on my bed and face me.

I sat on my study table while Indonesia and Malaysia were on my bed.

"Why didn't you come at our summer meeting?"

I tilted my head to the side "summer meeting?"

Indonesia pushed himself on my bed and hugged my pillow, placing it on his lap and placed both his elbows on it "the summer meeting is where all ASEAN members gather and party, I sent you an invitation"

I blinked a few times "I didn't get any"

We all looked at each other before a thought came to mind.

I sighed "maybe, brother didn't accept it, he doesn't like going to these types of things"

Malaysia snapped his finger and pointed at me "you have a point there, though, it's a shame, Cambodia was eager to meet you, and Singapore won't stop bragging about you too"

I giggled "I'm glad Singapore remembered me"

Indonesia laid on my bed and took a deep breath on my other pillow "anyone would remember you"

"But anyways, Cambodia will be here next week! Just in time for the autumn festival!"

"What's that?" I asked and took one pillow and sat on the bed crossed legged.

Malaysia grins and showed me his phone.

"The autumn festival is where we will set out flying lanterns and we'll make one our own, watch fireworks, eat delicious sweets, have tea under the autumn trees, and socialize! It's a very fun one!"

I scrolled down his phone as I read the description.

"This wasn't implemented last year" I said and gave the phone back to Malaysia.

"Last year, Tethys denied the responsibility of running the school activities every season, but for some reason he accepted it this year, that's why we have so much activities every season" Indonesia explained.

I hummed in response "poor Tethys, studying heir things as well as running the academy"

"Well, he's gonna be crushed to death when he successfully become the new continent leader, imagine running the whole world"

"That might be true..."

While we sat there, I suddenly remembered the box.

"Oh! By the way" I said and hopped off the bed and took the box from underneath.

"Do you know how to open this?"

I placed it on the middle of the bed and sat down.

"What is it?" Malaysia asked and examined it.

"It belonged to my father, but I couldn't open it"

"It looks like some sort of puzzle" Indonesia took it and shook it lightly near his ear.

"I thought so too, but I still couldn't solve it"

They both looked at me dumbfounded as if I said something out of the ordinary.

"Philipia said she couldn't solve something" Malaysia tugged on Indonesia's sleeves "can you believe that?"

Ah, I think I know what they mean "I'm not that smart, I can just understand it if you study it enough, but I can't say I'm smart to the point I know everything" I explained.

Indonesia laughed and placed the box down "what she said" he stated "anyways, I can't solve it either but!– I know someone who can help us"

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10 : 30 am

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"A puzzle?" Egypt raised a brow.

Malaysia, Indonesia and I went to his room to ask about the box and how to open it since he's known for puzzles and traps.

I even seen one in movies too.

"Yeah, it's like the key to open it"

The box was carved in a beautiful design but on the top had different patterns, some are circular, some are straight lines, and some are just flat surface but you can move it on both sides.

Egypt thinks for a minute "hmmm, I might know if I can see it" he said "but I'll try my best for anuket"

We went back to our own room after asking Egypt and he'll be visiting us in our dorm later.

It makes me excited what father has hidden inside it, but it also makes me curious how Egypt will open it.

As I walk in the hall going back to my room, I took a right turn and walked pass someone.

My head started to throb and my body automatically grabbed that person's wrist, stopping them halfway.

"Oh?"

I flinched when I realized what I did "I'm sorry! I didn't know what came over...me"

I glanced at the person and realized it was a fellow country leader.

"meraviglioso~ if it isn't lady philipia"

He faced me and smiled, leaning a little to my cheek and kissed it "come va?" He beams.

"I-italy?..."

He claps his hand softly "the one and only, mia signora"

"Ah, I'm sorry I grabbed your wrist earlier too, I didn't know what

came over me"

He laughed and shakes his head "nessun problema~ I get that many women likes me"

I blinked a few times and simply nodded "I see, well, I'm sorry for holding you back"

He nodded and I hurriedly continued walking back again.

Weird.

For some reason, this isn't the first time I've met him...?

It felt like I've met him already, from a very long time...

But what was odd was my body acting out on its own; why did I even grab his wrist?

Did I wanted or needed something? Or is it simply because it's Italy?

As I got closer to my room, some of my classmates were just outside and waiting for the next class.

But then, I heard a distinct giggle from the opposite direction to where I was heading.

Looking over to it, I saw no one but I felt a shiver.

At times like these, it's best not to investigate, J and China says so.

I went inside my room and sat back down when South stood before me "philipia, did you hear? Three new teachers are coming"

I shake my head "really? Who are they?"

He shrugs "dunno, although I feel like I won't like one of them"

Before long, the next teacher came and started our next lesson.

New teachers this fall?

Even teachers are now placed every season.

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3 : 40 pm

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"This thing is really weird" Malaysia said as he carries the box.

Egypt told us he can't come to our room so he asked us to just bring it by the roof where he's doing a *sun blessing prayer*...

We weren't sure what it was but we still did it.

"I can hear something rustling inside, there must be papers" Indonesia added.

I nodded on response "that's what I thought too, there could be letters inside it"

"Oh yeah, did you hear the new teachers coming? I heard sir ASEAN is one of them!" Malaysia beams.

I perked up "really? I haven't met sir ASEAN, but now he's going to be a teacher here"

Indonesia chuckled "I'm sure you'll get along, he's a very gentle and kind person, a bit naive too and easy target if one might say"

"But sir ASEAN is a wise man, he's smart too! And hardworking" Malaysia said in a proud tone.

I giggled and nodded "I'm excited to meet him"

Indonesia suddenly stops and both me and Malaysia glanced at him "what's wrong?" Malaysia asked.

Indonesia bite his lower lip and pointed somewhere.

We followed where it was and saw two girls at the distant, standing there and looking at us with wide eyes.

"Uhhh...."

They didn't seem to be students here nor were they students at the female academy.

One of the girls who's standing behind the one who's chest is puffed out is wearing a frilly white dress while the other is wearing the same thing yet it was black.

"Who're they?" Malaysia asked.

"I don't know, but I don't like the vibe they give..." Indonesia shudders before he placed his hands around our shoulders and turned around "let's just walk away and go to a different path towards the roof" he said.

But as we walk, we hear soft footsteps behind us.

I glance back and saw the two girls running towards us like they were gonna attack.

"Let's see! Let's see! Let'ssss seeeee!!!!~~~" the girl with a black dress caught up and pulled Indonesia away from us.

"Ackk!" He rolled on the grass like he was a leaf that got blown away.

"Laurasia seee???"

"Gondwandaaaaa seeee!!!!!!!! Ahhhhh!!!! HAHHAHAHAHAHAH!!!!!!"

The girl with the white dress grabbed my face and squished it together near her face while the girl with the black dress roughly grabbed Malaysia's face and pulled it close to her.

"Ahhhh!!! Theyff! sc-scaawwyyy!!!" Malaysia exclaimed with cheeks squished together.

(They're scary!!!)

"Ohhhhhhh~ so pretty! Pretty! Prettyyyy!!!!!"

The girl who's holding my face started breathing heavily with face flushed red.

"Hey! Let go of my friends you... You pretty scary ladies!" Indonesia stomps his feet and pulled the girl who's holding Malaysia away from him.

"Ah! Ah! Ahhhh~!!! Kihihihihihi!!! Laurasia, play?"

The girl who's holding me, giggled in a high tone "Gondwanda, playyyy!!!"

Suddenly, they both started pulling both me and Malaysia.

"Ahhhhh!!!!! Help!!!! Help!!!!" Malaysia exclaimed and struggled.

"I'm s-sorry ma'am, but who are you?" I asked.

They both stopped and turn to us in a creepy way– like those creepy head turn that you usually see in horror movies.

"Gondwanda~" the girl with the black dress said.

"Laurasia" the girl with the white dress said.

Suddenly, they both leaned close to our faces and said

"yellow?"

"Mellow?"

"Hellooooo~~~~~"

"Kihihihihihihihihi!!!!!"

I felt Malaysia shiver besides me and glanced at me, "are we gonna die?" He asked with a terrified look.

Indonesia caught up and pulled us both away from the two.

Gondwanda and Laurasia?

The two female leaders?

Tethys's siblings?

"Stop..."

We all halted and turn back around.

Tethys stood there, breathing heavily, clothes in disarray as if he ran a marathon, considering there were beads of sweat on his face and chest.

"Stop! Or else..."

Gondwanda and Laurasia both flinched, they released us and ran passed Tethys in such a monstrous speed.

Tethys sighed and glanced at us "sorry bout that, philia..." He said before following the two.

The three of us stood there dumbfounded, we were both confused and perplexed on what just happened.

"So... Should we go to the roof now...?" Indonesia asked in the confusing tension.

Me and Malaysia both nodded and headed om our way towards the rooftop like our main objective was.

That was super weird...

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Egypt looked at us like we were kids who lost their way home.

"So you're telling me, you were stopped halfway when two leaders attempted to kidnap you?"

Indonesia nodded "oddly enough, they wanted these two"

Hmm, he's right, they wanted me and Malaysia, but the did keep repeating the word *"yellow"*

I look over to Malaysia who's eyes are both brown.

"Malaysia, do you have yellow eyes?" I asked.

He looks at me and nodded "my right eye is, but I'm wearing contact lenses" he replied.

I see.

Indonesia sighed and sat on the floor of the rooftop besides Nepal who's reading a pocket book by the railing.

"Whatever that was, it was damn creepy" he said

"Did you see their eyes? It was like about to pop out, they kept looking wildly at us!" Malaysia rubs his arms "it gave me goosebumps"

Egypt sighed and turn to me "what about you anuket? Did those mongrels do something to you?" He asked.

I chuckled "other than squishing my cheeks, nothing else"

He hummed before taking out his handkerchief and softly rub my cheeks.

"Anyways, can we just do what we were meant to do?"

We all sat down and placed the box down in the middle.

"A puzzle box?" Nepal asked and closed his pocket book.

I nodded and sat between Indonesia and Malaysia.

"It's a box that belonged to anuket's father" Egypt sat besides Nepal

and lightly shook the box.

We all got close when Egypt rub his hands together.

He closed his eyes before opening them.

Suddenly the air around him changed, as if the prideful and proud Egypt suddenly became a serious pharaoh in the zone.

His hands were moving so fast that we couldn't keep up.

Clicking, twisting, rotating, snapping puzzle pieces here and there.

And the last one he touched was the flat surface of a puzzle.

He pressed his finger and slide it to the right, then he transfered to the other one and did the same but on the opposite direction before he pulled something out and we heard a soft click.

We were all in awe.

He sighed and wiped a sweat "hmp! What an old fashion puzzle, even a monkey can solve it" he said as if the old Egypt came back.

They all glanced at me before Egypt slides the box towards me "you can open it now" he said.

I nodded and slowly held the box.

I snapped the lock and it fell, breaking into two pieces.

"Yikes, it's rusted, we could've just broke it instead huh?" Malaysia grinned, Egypt slapped his arm "ow!"

"This box is a masterpiece, I had a hard time"

Malaysia raised a brow, "hard time? Didn't you just said that even a monkey can solve it?"

Egypt scoffs.

I giggled before opening the box.

"This is..."

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She's grown.

Cuter than before.

I fiddle with my locker around my neck as I look outside the hall windows through the west wing building.

Outside, I see Malaysia, Indonesia and philipia.

They were walking towards the entrance whilst Malaysia is carrying a familiar looking box.

"You were right huh? It's really fate, and terrifyingly, specific..." I mumbled.

Before turning to my heel and walk inside the empty hallway...

Well, maybe...

The not so empty hallway...

"Salve signore, Spanish empire...."

I stop and stare at the man who walked out of the corner of the hall.

Posture straight, and eyes narrowed with his lips formed in a smirk.

I shiver in fear but I kept my composure...

"Hmp... inútil...." He said and walked passed me.

The very air was sharp and limited, as if breathing also had a price

when you're around him.

I sighed in relief when that heavy tension subsided.

I really came in Pangaea in a bad time...

I hope you'll be doing fine, philipia...

"Well, no doubt that you'll do fine... After all you're his kid."

Snapping my locker close, I continued walking...

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"My darling philipia... Why are you crying?"

I sobbed and showed my crying flushed face "Lola, the little bird is injured, and I don't know what to do..."

"Aww, you have such a soft heart, here, I'll take the pain away"

She took the injured bird on my lap and softly trapped it in her hands.

"Blow on it" she said and I did.

She leaned it to her and she blew on it as well.

"The bird will be healed~"

She opened her hands when the bird that was injured suddenly flew.

"Whoahhhh!!! Lola was that magic?"

She nodded and pinched my cheeks "yes~"

"Can I do that? Can Lola teach me?"

She giggled and said "of course, but let's wait when you grow up..."

"Opo!"

Lola perked up and look behind her as if she felt someone.

"Stay here..." She said and stood up before covering her face with the yellow veil that she always use.

Walking not far from where I was.

She stopped when a woman came out from behind on one of the trees.

I couldn't really see them except black.

But something from her shine as it hit the sunlight– it came from her neck.

"Owie!" I said when it blinded my right eye.

Her necklace is blinding me!

I stood up and ran back to the house "mama!!"

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12 : 30 am

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I groaned when I flutter my eyes open.

I just dreamt a memory again but I can't seem to remember much...

I tried to change position but I realized that Malaysia was hugging me from behind rather tight while Indonesia was holding my hand infront of me on the side.

I'm sandwiched between the two.

Earlier, when we opened the box, what we found was rather unexpected.

Egypt though– he expected golds or jewelry so he was rather disappointed when we got was a small key and a very old paper with nothing on it.

Although the key looked like it meant for something small like another box.

But in the end, I guess it's just a bunch of old things from papa.

I sighed and slowly got off the two and went outside to get a glass of water.

"Oh, you're still awake"

Brunei smiled as he sits on one of the chairs while Israel came out of the kitchen carrying a mug.

"Angel, you're still up?" He asked and approached me.

He placed the back of his hand on my forehead "you don't have a fever don't you?"

I shake my head "I don't" and smiled.

He sighed in relief before walking back to the table and took a seat.

"Is Malaysia and Indonesia in your room?" Brunei asked while I took a glass of water.

I nodded and sat with them "we played a lot" I giggled.

"Hmm, I see"

Israel took a sip from his mug "so, why are you still up? Had a

nightmare? I felt a pain earlier"

Israel knows, that's amazing.

"No, rather than a nightmare, I had a memory"

"Oh? I'm interested" Brunei grins and placed both elbows on the table.

"Well, it's a memory of my grandma, and the times we spent together"

"I'm sure it was good" Israel smiled.

I nodded "yeah, it was really good... But"

"But?" Brunei looked worried.

"I also had a memory of her where she talked to someone..."

Israel and Brunei glanced at each other.

"Who is it? Can you still remember?"

I squinted my eyes and held my head, trying hard to think on what I had dreamt.

"Hmm, all I could remember was that this person, didn't look like they belonged in the country, and that, they were wearing a veil..."

"Veil?"

Now that a think about it, didn't Egypt had the same encounter?

And I kept getting this feeling that, I know this person...?

Like I've seen this person?

"Angel"

I snapped from my thoughts and looked over to Israel and Brunei who's looking at me worriedly.

"Oh, I'm sorry I must've been lost in my thoughts" I assured them.

Israel sighed and pats my head "is that person with a veil bothering you... Wait... Veil?"

"Yes?"

"Now that reminds me... I did meet someone like that too, although instead of a black veil, they were wearing a white one, and it looked like they were some sort of a runaway bride"

"What? Runaway bride?"

Israel nodded "but it was a bit pinkish and it was covered in mud since at that time there was a storm and a war"

"Oh..."

"Yeah, and she was the one who told me to sail across the sea and go to your country to find help"

Someone told Israel to come look for help from us?

"Do you remember their name?"

He shakes his head "at that time, I was escaping with my people and at the time it looked like she was being chased, since after telling me to go to your country, she bolted away and distracted some soldiers so that we can't be discovered" he said "I wish I could thank that person"

"A runaway bride being chased" Brunei muttered as he leans back his chair "sounds weird though that anyone would even marry at that time"

"I really didn't think it was weird until we left, but to me, it looks like it was a forced one"

"That's understandable, but, who was the person you were running from again?"

Israel shudder and sighed "Third Reich; oh, speaking of him, the

soldiers chasing that bride were his soldiers, but they called her *miss mutterseelenallein*"

"Mutter what?" Brunei wondered.

"Mutterseelenallein, it's an old German word for *lonely*" Israel replied and took a sip.

"I wonder who she was forced to marry that professor Reich's soldiers would chase her?"

Israel shrugged "who knows, she's probably a woman of high status"

I wonder who she is...?

I look down to my glass of water where it shows my reflection.

But, wherever this person is now, I hope she's somewhere safe.

If she is the same person who my grandma and Egypt's father met, then maybe she's still escaping at those times...

And maybe, she was the same person Estonia and Finland met...?

But to have live that long would only mean she's either a royal city or a country...

"Haaa, anyways, it's getting late, it's best to go back to sleep now" Brunei said and stood up.

I nodded and took my glass "okay"

Israel decided to stay behind as he finished his drink whilst me and Brunei went back to our rooms.

Going back to my bed, I lay between the two and felt Indonesia hug me from behind this time.

I giggled and held his hand as I hugged Malaysia who unexpectedly hugged me back too.

It's so warm, hugging someone as you sleep really makes anyone drowsy and easily sleepy...

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12 : 30 pm

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I yawned as I walk inside the hall during lunch.

I just got back from tending the sunflowers and tomorrow, we'll have to move each and everyone one of those flowers to the greenhouse.

Greece told me it was Tethys who personally chose and designed the greenhouse for the garden club.

It was really sweet and kind of him, he spoils his friend; how admirable.

Speaking of Tethys, I wonder how those two sisters; Gondwanda and Laurasia are doing?

China explained to me that they were the first two female students to attend in the male academy whilst I'm the third one.

They have long graduated (of course) and are now continent leaders and they have been very good leaders...

I heard that their intelligence are incomparable and are calm leaders...

But, seeing and talking to them personally somehow made me question the *calm* part.

China even warned both me and Malaysia to stay away from the two.

But it turns out, it was already too late since they almost abducted me and Malaysia.

I guess anyone with yellow eyes makes them interested in it...

As I walk close I saw two students talking in the hall, and the two students are someone who I recognize.

"Good afternoon" I greeted when Alaska jumped from his position and hid behind Texas.

"G-g-g-g-g-g-good afternoon female leader!" He greeted back, stuttering and trembling.

I chuckled nervously– I must've done something wrong to him.

"Greetings, female leader" Texas greeted back with a bow to which Alaska copied.

"I hope you're enjoying your time here, in Pangaea" I said, trying to avoid scaring Alaska.

"Yes, the free groceries was very satisfying" Texas delightedly said.

I giggled "I'm glad, I do like the free groceries when your fridge is empty in Pangaea"

Alaska whispered something and Texas perked up "ah, right, we still have something to do with the principals office" he muttered.

"Oh, so you're lost?"

They both flinched but didn't deny.

I chuckled "over there, that's the north wing building, third floor, you'll see the principals office"

Alaska smiled and bowed at me with a flustered face "t-t-thank you, female leader"

They both thanked me and went ahead.

It delighted me that I helped two people, nothing beats being thanked.

This motivates me to be even more helpful! If mama was still alive,

she'll praise me like she always does whenever I do something good.

As I turn to the right hall, I saw Russia talking to his father; USSR.

Russia saw me and waved.

Ah, maybe it would've been best if I went with J and South to the school store.

"Sunshine" he called and I waved back.

"Good afternoon professor USSR and Russia"

Professor USSR grinned and faced me "hello, miss philipia" he greeted.

I avoided eye contact and simply nodded my head.

It seems to have amused him too.

"You looked like you were in a good mood" professor USSR stepped close and leaned down to my height.

He's so tall...

"W-well, that's because..."

They both tilted their heads "because?" He asked.

I gulped and fiddled with my thumbs "I had fun, at the garden... Earlier"

Next time, I'll definitely go with J or south or with anyone.

Being alone while walking in this hallway is anxiety-inducing now.

Russia pulls his father back from his right shoulder and stepped Infront of me "personal space, father"

He giggled "I apologize..."

"Goddess!"

I flinched and turn back to where Germany is while holding an unfinished mini sculpture on his hands.

"I've been looking everywhere for you!" He said while beaming ignoring the fact that professor USSR and Russia are behind me.

"I'm sorry, I was just about to go back to my room after lunch and tending the north garden" I explained.

Germany shakes his head "no problem, but goddess, if you wouldn't mind, I would like to use your magnificent vessel for a reference to this sculpture I'm making" he said.

I hear professor USSR snicker behind me while Russia groaned.

"O-of course, but, let's do it after school at dorm?"

Germany thinks for a minute with his hand under his chin "good idea, goddess, as always, you're wise"

I blinked a few times; confused on what he meant by that.

When suddenly, another person was walking towards us behind Germany.

And of course, when professor USSR is here, professor Reich shouldn't be a problem... Right?

He smiled "how odd to see you here, Germany"

Germany turn to his father and gave him a blank look, fixing his glasses, he faced me again but now with a smile.

Professor USSR laughed softly "I didn't think the son you were so proud of became a devoted slave to his... *Religion*"

Professor Reich still kept a smile but I can tell, he was releasing a menacing aura "unlike you who's so openly supporting someone else's son rather than yours, I pity him"

Russia glared at professor Reich, and it was quite obvious.

For some reason, I'm in the middle of four strong leaders, and I can't help but feel the heavy tension around them.

Good thing we're in Pangaea, if not, it would not have ended good.

Although Germany was simply sanding the sculpture.

I should try to leave.

As I slowly take a step back with Germany following me, but I stop when I heard someone clapping not far from us.

Everyone turn towards the direction to who was clapping to see who it was but...

Even if I'm not looking, even if I'm not even glancing back...

I can tell, just by how the atmosphere around us became heavier than it was just now– who this person is.

"Hahahaha.... What a sight, USSR, Third Reich, Russia and Germany all in one spot, conversing as if they were just old buddies with their offspring" he stopped with a tap of his shoe that echoed the hallway.

I have to run.

"Why, if it isn't Spanish Empire" professor Reich called.

I took a deep breath when I suddenly feel his eyes avert towards me.

My back even felt it, the hairs all over my body stood and my breathing began to be frantic.

"Sunshine..." Russia whispered behind me, his large hands placing itself on my back.

He must've noticed my discomfort.

"If it isn't my little *flower*"

I shudder at the way he called me out.

It's been a long time...

I didn't feel this terrified when I met him at the guardian meetings...

Why is it now? Why now?

"Come" he ordered and I felt that heavy pressure my body had never felt in a long time.

"How dare you"

I snapped when Germany spoke nonchalantly.

"Excuse me?"

"How dare you order the goddess, luckily you still don't know then your sin can still be excused, but now that you do, watch your mouth"

I turn to Germany who was now glaring at Spanish Empire.

The professor's looked shocked at the way Germany responded.

I bite my lower lip and look away once again.

Spanish Empire roared a laughter whilst Germany kept a confused expression.

"I can't believe this is your son now, Reich"

"Don't call me so casually" professor Reich said in an obvious distasteful tone "watch how you call someone, you're now only a teacher, and you're no lower than the students here" he said and turn to his heel.

As he walked pass me, his eyes momentarily glanced at me.

For some reason, it felt like professor Reich didn't like what was going on, he actually looked like he pitied me.

which I didn't like

"Hmp, still a cold person" Spanish Empire said and scoff.

"Well, it was fun to see you all, but I still have matters to attend to..." He turn to his heel and started walking.

"Mind if I join?" Professor USSR asked to which Spanish Empire rolled his eyes at.

"Do what you want"

Professor USSR then followed after Spanish Empire before giving us one last glance and a smirk.

I gritted my teeth.

I can't believe I made him think he still has the power to hold me down.

"Are you okay, goddess?" Germany asked and I turn to him.

If it wasn't for Germany, I would've turned around and walked towards Spanish Empire and do what he orders me to do like he used to do...

I simply nodded and gripped on to my skirt.

"Thank you, Germany..." I said and slowly walked.

"Sunshine"

"I want to be alone for a while, please...."

They both nodded, but still showed a worried look.

I sighed and forced a smile, hopefully to reassure them "I'm okay, really, I was just overwhelmed..."

"Okay... But sunshine, if you have problems, don't just keep it to yourself we're here to help you"

That made me relieved and happy that I'm not alone.

But, this time, I just need some sort of air and away from the pressure of powerful, large countries.

I nodded and smiled.

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When I already walked a bit farther, I suddenly felt weak, leaning on the wall, I slowly slide down.

Holding on to myself, I bring my legs close to my chest.

I can't stop trembling...

Unlike before, my brothers were there but now, I'm alone here...

Tito might be here but, I don't want to trouble him.

"Oh... I wonder how Tito feels now that *he's*... here" I muttered and forced myself up.

For some reason, I can't think straight, I can't seem to be myself right now.

As I was about to go to where Tito is, when someone suddenly blocked my way and placed a handkerchief on my nose and mouth.

I struggled but because of what just happened, I was still somehow weak.

Damn it!

Why does the worse things happen in my weakest state?

Weakest?

Ah... So I really am still weak...

If I can't even face Spanish Empire, how can I even face brother when we execute the plan against him?

As my vision starts to darken and my eyelids heavy.

Someone lifted my face on my chin and made me face them.

"Ahhh, pretty... Pretty, pretty, Prettyyyyy"

Continent leader... Laurasia?

———————

< < < End of Chapter 12 : Mutterseelenallein

> > > Coming Chapter 13 : Treasure hunt...?

———————

Fact : 3 states are female and are in the female academy

Fact 2 : Malaysia and Indonesia are now aware.

Fact 3 : Singapore still wears his gloves outside sometimes.

Fact 4 : Greg has a new girlfriend.

Fact 5 : Russia can now play the guitar.

Fact 6 : Germany had three buildings made in his country of his religion and club.

Fact 7 : Third Reich doesn't care what Germany has become.

Fact 8 : Italy already has a fated pair.

Fact 9 : Martial's sex drive was in haywire when philipia went home.

*Fact 10 : It was a code ^^*

———————

[Oh my gosshhhh I am so so sorryyyy !!!!!!! Ahhhhh !!!!!!!! I'm really! Really! Sorry!!!!!!!!]

[School has been stressing and it's tough work, and I could barely hold my phone at all!]

[I was able to write bit by bit but everytime I try to edit, lots of assignments and projects keep compiling!]

[I've been having major writer's block recently, and I hate it so much]

[I'm so sorryyy !! Forgive meeeee !!!!!]

[*Cries* but I hope you enjoyed it and I'll "definitely" do my best next chapter!]

[Much love π^π]

.---- .---- -.... ...--

Chapter 13 : Treasure hunt...?

[image]
[image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image]

[image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy ~]

_____

A voice is humming.

Someone is besides me and humming a sweet tone.

It feels warm.

I feel warm.

"Wakey, wakey, wakeyyy~~"

I groaned and flutter my eyes open.

The first thing I saw was the ceiling, then I roam my eyes around and it seems to be that I'm in a room.

Laying on a huge and spacious bed that has it's own curtains on it.

"Hello, yelloww~"

I look to my right where continent leader Laurasia is sitting, eyes wide and staring at me, with her lips formed into a huge cheshire like grin.

"Ah!"

I jolted and immediately back away.

But then I felt a pang in my head that made me halt and hiss in pain.

"Kihihihihi~~!! No moveeee, head, pain, medicine, inject~!!!" She gleefully said.

I blinked a few times, processing on what she said.

But then I remember; while I was running away from the overwhelming presence of strong countries around me, I was taken by one of her guards and put me to sleep.

They were able to take me in my weakest state that moment.

If brother was here he would've slapped me for being easily taken.

I get kidnapped easily many times and it's frustrating that I still fail to even get out of it.

"W-what is it that you want...?" I asked.

Let's stall her for a bit then run away.

Even if she's a continent leader, she can't legally take a student from Pangaea.

Wait, has it been days? Or hours?

I can't tell...

Laurasia grins and jumps off the bed and spins around, her skirt twirling with the motion.

"Here, you, yellow!!!!"

Yellow?

"I'm sorry, I don't really get what you m--"

"YELLOW!"

Suddenly, she glared at me and slams her hand on the bed.

"YELLOOOWWWWW?!?!?!?"

I shuddered when I felt her overwhelming voice.

But her angry expression switched almost immediately into a mild one.

"Kihihihi~~!"

I gulped and clutch on the sheet and pry no more. She just scared me.

Scarier than brother.

"Ah! Drink? Food? Kihihihihihi!!! Waitttttt" she giggled and skipped walk to the door.

As she closed it, she peeks one more and grins widely that it made the hair stand on my skin.

The sound of the door closing and another sound of it being locked on the other side.

I sigh and it felt like I've been holding my breath the whole time.

"Okay, I have to calm down..."

Taking a deep breath, I calmed down and analyze my situation.

Stop and think philipia... Stop and think.

I got off the bed and walk around the room.

This room isn't ordinary, it looks like it was straight out of a fairytale book.

The interior designs looked like it was from the Victorian era.

The windows were sealed too but at least I know, I'm still in Pangaea.

I might break the window but, they can't be this careless to kidnap someone and put them in a room where there's a window that can

be broken.

But it's still worth the try.

Taking the chair, I raised it up above my head and threw it at the glass window.

"Eh...?"

The sound of shattered glass filled the room, the pieces of it fell on the floor and the chair is gone.

This is still suspicious why would they even put me in a room where I can easily escape...?

"Oh..."

I got close to the window and look down.

"That's... Dangerous" I muttered.

It looks like, I'm in a building in panthalassa city.

And the floor I'm in is the top: for short, I'm in (what I can count) the 35th floor.

"Ah~ nuh uh~ you fall, you die~"

I jolted when Laurasia entered the room casually while holding a tray of water and food.

"Sit? Eat?" She pats the bed and smiled, not even bothered that I broke the window.

A Victorian styled room in a modern building.

Is this a hotel?

"Please tell me why I'm here" I asked again.

She simply smiled with eyes wide open.

I can feel her gaze piercing through my very soul.

"Because..." She mumbled "yellow" she points.

"Yellow?"

She closed her right eye and points it "yellow...?"

I held my right eye and realized what she meant.

So it's about my eye *again*.

"W-why...?"

"Pretty~ yellow~ mellow...."

She raised her hand and snapped her finger "hellow~~"

Suddenly, five men (looks like bodyguards) came in the room and stood besides her.

"Take~ she eat~ she drink~" Laurasia smiled.

The men nodded and approached me slowly.

I have a bad feeling about this.

"I'm so sorry!" I yelled and took the vase besides me and threw it at them before attacking.

Kicking one of them down, I pulled the curtains and covered it on him for a delay before making a run for the door.

I glanced at Laurasia momentarily and she was simply standing there, as if she's telling me that, no matter where I go she'll be able to get me.

The thought of it send a shiver to me and I can't help but question if what I did was even right.

Once I got out, I slammed the door behind me and ran in a hall that was completely different from the Victorian styled room I was just in.

Making a sharp right, I saw two more guards walking and saw me.

They can tell that I wasn't supposed to be here but I still charged at them and slide down in between on one of their legs.

I guess being small has its own advantages.

"Catch her!" Laurasia yelled.

I stood up and ran again. I made another right turn and saw a single elevator at the end of the hall.

Sprinting towards it, I frantically pressed the only down button.

"Come on, come on!..."

I jolted when they were already behind me with Laurasia.

I kept pressing the button until it finally opened.

But what greeted me from the other side was someone unexpected.

"Wha! Gondwanda down!"

I fell on top of another continent leader: Gondwanda.

She blinked a few times and processed what was happening.

But before the elevator could even close, one of the guards caught up and pinned me down.

"Ah! Hey! Please let me go!" I yelled.

"Gondwanda confuse! Gondwanda wanna know what's happening!" She exclaimed and faced Laurasia who showed no emotion except the same sickening grin.

"Kihihihihi!!" She giggled and snapped her finger again.

The man pinning me down, locked my hands behind me and dragged me back.

"Nghn! Please tell me what you want from me!"

"Yellow!" Laurasia shouts "yellow! Yellow! Yellow!!!!!"

Her ear piercing scream echoed in the hall as I was being dragged back.

Gondwanda wasn't able to do anything other than stay back in the elevator and watch me being taken away.

"Hnghn!"

They threw me back on the bed and guard the door.

Laurasia sighs and smiled again "eye pretty~ wanna know which is which is which is which!!!!!" She says and I couldn't understand what she meant.

"I don't know why my eye is like this, so please let me go!" I pleaded.

Laurasia shakes her head before picking up a huge shard of glass from the window I broke earlier.

I just realized how cold the room is.

Since this is a tall building, the wind coming through is strong and chilly.

"Honeycomb..." She mumbled.

"What?"

"Honeycomb... You... Which is which?"

Honeycomb?

She tilts her head to the side before pointing the sharp tip of the shard "want it!"

I jolted before her men walks towards me and held me down, all of them were pinning my arms and legs on the bed "ngh! Let me go! You can't do this!"

Why does bad things keep happening to me...?

Laurasia then takes the knife that was given to her before she steps

on the bed and sits on top of me "let me have yellow!!!!"

Raising her hand above her head, one of the men held my head steady.

And I think I get what she's about to do.

"No! Let me go! Let go!"

"HONEYCOMB!!!!!!!!!"

The pain rushes throughout my entire body.

As the knife plunges itself onto my right eye, my marks unconsciously came out.

And all my sense were on the highest level so the pain was indescribable.

I screamed on top of my lungs and struggled with all my might.

I felt the knife move in a circular motion and it was so painful it felt like hell.

"Stopp! Please! Stop!!!!!" I begged yet she laughed and giggled in response.

It looks like she's enjoying what she's doing.

When I feel like she was about to take my eye out, the energy in me slowly drained and my vision starts to fade.

"Come! Come! Come!! YELLOW!!!!! AHHHHH!!! KAHAHAHAHHAHAHA!!!!"

"Stand down and stop what you are doing!"

Suddenly, the room was filled with a heavy pressure that even if I'm already laying down on the bed, it felt like something else was being pressed down on me.

"Ghn! Aaahhh!!!! Tethys! Tethys!! Laurasia in paiinnnn!!!!"

Laurasia got off me and started trembling besides me while holding her neck.

Her marks showing and glowing.

My body feels numb. I can't move either but... I finally felt safe.

"Philia!"

I couldn't really understand what happened but, it seems like Gondwanda called Tethys.

He held me and kept shaking me.

"Get a grip! Philia! Where's the doctor you useless piece of shits!"

My right eye felt so hot and I can still feel the blood coming out.

"Philia! Philia...!"

His voice is slowly fading.

It's becoming muffled...

Lola, you said before that this eye is a blessing.

But I curse having it...

I curse it...

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"AHHHHHHH!!!!!!!! Laurasia is soorrrryyy!!!!"

I lifted my hand from the button again and the electricity that's electrifying my sister Laurasia stopped.

I had her in the punishment room where both her hands are chained on both sides on the wall.

And this button stand not far from where she is, is connected to the chains that releases electricity.

"Sorry? Didn't I warn you both not to touch her? If Gondwanda didn't tell me... If I was even a second late... You would've..." I bite my lower lip so hard that blood oozes out.

The thought of what will happen if I wasn't here really makes me angry!

I slammed the button and it electrified Laurasia again "AHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!"

Gondwanda was behind me, watching the scene before her as she trembles on her feet.

"The mere thought of you filthy lowlife even touching her is making me want to kill you" I snarled.

"Laurasia is sorry Tethys... No more! No more pain!" She whimpered, snot and tear filled face as she begged.

I clicked my tongue and pressed it on again.

"AHHHHHH!!!!! NO! NO! NO!!!!!!!! HURTS! TETHYS!!!!!"

I can tell Gondwanda is trembling behind me.

"Let me say this once more... Including the guards here in this room! Try to touch even one person in that school! I will personally kill you..."

I approached Laurasia who's slumped on the floor with her hands still chained "and if you disobey and take a step closer to her... I

will behead you myself, sister..."

I stood up and I faced them "I am your next leader! I will be the one holding all of your throats next! And if you disobey one order from me! Make sure you already gave your prayers!"

Turning to my heel, I walked towards the door with two bodyguards following behind me.

"Don't let that filthy thing get out until I say so!" I ordered once more.

As I walk down the hall, I entered a specific room with two soldier guarding the door.

"Who's inside?" I asked.

"Country leader China and North Korea" one of them replied.

"I see... I'll be going in alone, you two wait here" The two guards following me nodded.

One of the soldier opened the door for me and I stepped inside.

"Son of a bitch!"

And as expected, I didn't expect a good greeting from these two; especially China.

"Good to see you as well, China"

He glared at me as holds my shirt on my collar and against the wall.

"What happened to her?!"

I can see that his right eye was still a bit red.

Both of these two are in line for her so they must've felt what she felt...

I'm envious...

I'm still in the middle of breaking the soul collision with her so I

still can't get in line...

But a little bit more and I will be next... Hopefully.

"My sister took her and tries to take her yellow eye by force and I take full responsibility, so you can hurt me as you like" I replied.

China formed his hand into a fist and was about to punch me.

"China!" North yelled and he punched the wall besides me instead.

The wall was slightly cracked.

"Everyday there's not a single minute where she isn't hurt... So much for the safest place and school" he mumbled and stumble back.

"China, you weren't the only one who felt it... And you aren't the only one who's angry, but it's irrational to punch a continent leader" North explained.

"Irrational?!" China exclaimed "a continent leader herself took philipia! And almost gauged her right eye out! Why is it still irrational!?"

"I can understand what you feel China! But it's indecisive right now! Besides, those two were already stripped off of their title!"

"Bullshit! If Tethys didn't came she would've taken her right eye out! And she would be on that bed with a missing eye! So can you still still call that irrational?! Indecisive?! Fucking tell me that North!"

North sighed and held his forehead "let's just stop, it's done, philipia is safe now and next door..."

China kicked the chair and sat down on it.

I sighed and fixed my shirt, I walked towards the door that leads to where philia is resting.

She lays there on the bed, a bandage wrapped around her right eye.

I knew my sisters were obsessed with yellow eyes but they've never once resorted to such measure.

Why would she even gauge her eye out...?

There has to be a reason.

"Honeycomb..."

I swiftly turn to China "what did you say?"

"That's what philipia kept muttering earlier"

"I see..."

China narrowed his eyes at me "what is it?"

"It's nothing for you to know"

I walked pass him after closing the door behind me.

"Tethys!"

"Don't even get close to what you shouldn't get close... Otherwise I can no longer protect you" I warned.

Looking away, I opened the door "it's for everyone's own good..."

Honeycomb.

That shit should've been gone and erased.

That stupid sister of mine...

"Shit..."

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When Tethys left, me and North wondered the same thing.

"There has to be more to this, I'm sure Laurasia won't do such a thing for a mere obsession for an eye color"

He's right and because of it her right eye was so damaged that it will take a while to heal.

"Honeycomb, it rings a bell" I said and went to where philipia is.

"Do you notice it, China"

"What?" I snarled, still bitter about the fact he defended Tethys.

He sighs "the place is oddly familiar"

"Yeah... it did"

When I was called here; a place that I've never been before– the moment I stepped in a flash of distorted memories came to me, but I couldn't really understand what it was.

But like North said.

It isn't our first time here.

I sat on the chair and held philipia's hand "get well soon..."

North took a seat at the other side and take out his phone "I'll contact the school about it"

I nodded and still kept my gaze at her sleeping form.

The bandage wrapped around her right eye gives my heart an ache.

Damn it.

I'm still powerless...

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"Are you sure you're supposed to be up now?" Malaysia worriedly asked.

Ever since that time, everyone has been on guard.

My right eye has fully healed now too and the security in school increased.

Now, even if you're a leader, if you're not a student you cannot enter, although there are exception but that is up for the student councils to decide.

The visiting hour has decreased as well.

Students can still go out of the school but only for an hour.

"I've been in bed for about a week now, I'm sure there are school activities I missed"

Malaysia shakes his head "no can do! Stay in bed!"

"But, I feel like I'd get sicker if I stay in bed even more"

Malaysia pouts and shakes his head, he turn me around back to my room.

"B-but!"

"Philipiaaaaaaaa"

I flinched and nodded in defeat.

Malaysia tucked me back in bed and kissed my forehead which I didn't even expect.

"Oh... A-ahhh, sorry, I got used to it since I tuck my sister in bed a lot before" he bashfully explained.

"I didn't know you had a sister"

He grinned "I do~ anyways, rest up, the teacher said you can go to school starting next week"

I smiled and nodded "okay, thank you for staying behind with me, Malaysia"

That time with Laurasia is a blur to me now and I could barely remember anything other than what she kept saying: *honeycomb*.

What does it even mean?

After I got home, everyone was so worried and got angry on my behalf.

And I also realized that the people in line for me were actually in pain as well, and that they felt what I felt that time.

China had to explain to me what it really means.

And now I know how Brunei and Israel knows whenever I'm in pain.

I should take care of myself more so that they can no longer be in pain too.

"No biggie~ rest up philipia"

Malaysia then left the room and I can hear his footsteps fading.

I sighed and sit up.

I've already slept plenty so I don't really need even more sleep.

Stretching my arms backwards, I pulled the drawer from the very bottom of my bedside table and take out the box that papa owned.

"Hmm"

I opened it and the same contents were still there just as I left it.

"A rusty key and an old paper"

I examined the key and it seems to be for another box or something

small?

I sigh and put it back in again and took the old paper.

"There's really nothing on it..." I mumbled as I examined it back to back.

I let myself fall back on my bed, holding the paper to my chest.

Pulling the paper to my nose, I inhaled it's scent.

The scent of warmth and nostalgia.

It smells like papa, it's comforting.

When mama died, papa was the one who took over the household chores and even took over cooking.

Whilst we were captured by Spain, he still made sure to give time to play with me.

He made sure to give me affection as much as mama did.

But...

"Mnh..." I bite my lower lip when tears threatened to spill.

Taking a deep breath, I stare at the ceiling and raised the paper above me.

When it hit the light, it suddenly gives this transparent look.

And with the light, I saw a faded writings on it.

"Whoah!" I quickly sit up and got off my bed.

Running to my study table.

I took my study lamp with it's neck that I can bend and move, I placed two books vertically and placed the paper on top of the two, creating like a bridge.

Bending the lamp, I placed it right underneath the paper and turned

it on.

I squinted my eyes a little since the letters... No, it's not letters.

"Numbers?..."

They were faded. "45 dot 45...65645...12 dot 12..38...683..59"

I blinked a few times and wrote it to another fresh paper

45.4565645 12.3868359...

I look back to the box that's on my bed and opened it again.

"Is there any more?"

I looked inside and didn't even notice the second paper there.

I took it and did the same as I did to the first one.

"Let's see..."

I blinked a few times when there was another written on it.

But this time, it wasn't numbers.

I stumble back as my eyes kept it's gaze on the paper.

"It can't be..." I muttered and covered my mouth, baffled on what I just read.

"Did papa knew how to write it...?"

I bite my lower lip and took the paper. Placing it back to the box, I wore my jacket and slippers before carrying it as I left my room.

"Ah! Philipia?" Malaysia called, who's playing a game at the living room.

I ignored him and just left.

"Philipia!" He called again and chased after me "what's wrong?" He held my hand and stop me.

"I have to... I have to find Egypt!" I replied and went to the elevator, pressing the button.

How weird, I also did this when Laurasia was chasing after me.

"Hold on! Just tell me what is going on?"

"I can't right now, I have to find Egypt!"

Malaysia grabbed my hand "philipia you can't go outside! Your body will break!"

"I've already rested enough! I just have to find Egypt, I need to ask him about something!"

Malaysia groans "just tell me and I'll pass it to him"

"No need, I can do it mysel--"

Suddenly, Malaysia pushed me against the wall and trapped me between his hands "what is my reason here huh?!"

"Malaysia...?"

"I stayed behind to take care of you! I stayed behind so that you can ask me, depend on me!"

I stared at Malaysia as his expression slowly became flushed, tears filled his eyes that seems to make it shine.

"Damn it... We couldn't protect you because you're selfish, you think you can do everything by yourself philipia but then... Why are we here? Can't you at least ask me or depend on one of us...?"

He sobbed, held both my shoulders, and placing his head on my chest "I'm here okay? At least let me be useful for you..."

I soften my gaze and pat his head "I'm sorry... I'm sorry"

"Please, let's just go inside, your wearing thin clothes it's already autumn..."

I nodded "okay..."

"And ask me first! I can be smart too!"

I nodded "yes, I know, I'm sorry"

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"Here"

Malaysia placed a mug of ice Milo on the table with a plate of cookies.

"Thank you"

He sighs and sat down besides me "now, tell me what it is you want to ask him"

I took a sip and nodded "it's about the paper we found in Papa's box"

"Oh, you mean that empty paper and key?"

"Yes, and I think I found out what was written on it"

Malaysia raised a brow at me "you found something written on it? On that empty paper?"

I brought Malaysia to my room and showed him what I did earlier.

"Ohhhh, so it's a hidden message, wait how old is this paper?"

I shrug "I'm not sure"

"Hmmm, but the fact that a hidden message like this was made long ago just says that old people are sure smart" he said.

"Do you know what these numbers are then?"

He nodded and take out his phone "if it is what I think it is..."

He began typing on his phone and it awed me how fast it was even if he was only using one hand.

Whenever I'm using my phone I use two hands and I still have a hard time typing.

"Ah-ha!" He exclaimed and showed me his phone "it's a coordinate of a place"

I take his phone and tap the map and it showed me the exact place "lazaretto nuovo?"

Malaysia peeks behind me and checks it as well "now how would your own pops know this coordinate?"

I shake my head "I'm not sure, but I think I have to go there"

I gave him his phone back.

"Huh?!"

"You said I can go to school next week right? And the teachers allowed me to take this week's rest"

Malaysia stammered, as if he doesn't know what to say to me anymore "philipia..." He groaned.

I grinned "and like you said earlier, I should try to depend on you right?"

"How would you even know your pops wants you to go to that place?"

I look away, I can't possibly tell him about the second letter.

But on that second letter, it definitely tells me to go there...

"Okay, okay, I can tell you've already made up your mind and I can't stop you anymore, also touché on me being dependable"

I giggled and hugged Malaysia "thank you, Malaysia"

"I'm just gonna guess your bored or curious"

I nodded.

"You didn't even tell which one– okay! Since we're going there, we have to ask the person who owns that country"

Malaysia turns the lamp off and arranged my study table again.

"Which country is it?" I asked.

Malaysia turns to me and replied, "Italy"

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6 : 35 pm [Room 7]

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"Hmm? You want to visit a place from my country?" Italy asked while eating a popsicle in autumn.

I can't blame him, I eat ice cream when it's raining so I guess we have something similar.

"Yes, if you don't mind..." I plead.

He chuckled and pats my head, I feel my cheeks burning and my heart thumping.

What an odd feeling.

"No worries, I'd be happy to let you visit"

"But what will you do there sunstar?" Kazhakstan asked who's seated at the living room.

"It's a long story but, I want to go there..." I explained, as subtle as I can.

"Hmm, alrighty~"

Italy smiled at me again and takes out his phone before dialing

someone.

He spoke in his language so I really didn't understand; well, I did understood a little bit and I only got the word '*as expected*'

"You're good to go, I've told Venice you'll be coming"

I beamed "thank you, Italy"

"Oh? Philipia?"

I look behind Italy where France came out of the kitchen "why are you here?"

"I came to ask something from Italy, but I already had it"

"What is it?"

His eyes tells me he's curious.

I giggled and replied "I'm visiting a certain place"

"A certain place? Won't you need a chopper?"

It's nice that he doesn't question why I would go and that why I'm out of bed.

"Oh right, now that you've mentioned it"

France cleared his throat and takes out his phone before texting (faster than Malaysia) on it before putting it back in his pocket again "I've told Paris about it now, you can use my chopper" he said and look away with a tiny tiny of pink on his cheeks.

I perked up "thank you, France!"

He cough and walked towards the inner hall "d-don't mention it, I haven't been able to do anything for you so..." His voice fades when he was gone.

Italy turn to me again and winked.

Ba-dump.

Huh?

"Anyways, is that all?"

I snapped back and nodded "ah, y-yes, thank you Italy"

He smiled and pats me again "buona notte~"

[Trans: Good night]

And with that, he closed the door.

I held my chest and think for a minute. That was so weird, did my heart just skip a beat?

"How odd..."

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I blinked a few times when Malaysia wasn't alone while waiting at the departing area of the school where France's chopper was waiting.

"Uhm... Egypt, Indonesia and Israel?"

Israel stood there with his hands crossed, he walks towards me and flicked my forehead which he also hissed and held his forehead.

Ah right, my pain is also his pain.

Do the pain he just gave me backfired at him too. That's so odd.

"You– I can't believe you decide to travel while on the middle of resting"

I chuckled lightly "sorry, I just really have to..."

Israel sighs and shakes his head "it's fine, we're already here anyways"

"Anuket! Worry not! I'm here with you so that you won't be eaten by angry thunderstorms" Egypt reassured, although it didn't feel like I felt reassured.

"Hahahaha! Nonetheless! It feels like we'll be on a treasure hunt!" Indonesia grins.

I nodded and agreed.

"Let's go?" Malaysia takes out his hand and I accepted it.

We walked towards the captain of the chopper "bonne journée, dirigeants" he bowed and takes off his hat as he greets us.

[Trans: good day, leaders]

"I'm pretty sure he meant it for me" Egypt whispered but got on the chopper.

Me and Indonesia quietly chuckled.

As we strap ourselves on, the captain starts the engine and wears the headphone.

He spoke in English but it had a deep French accent and somehow, I kinda liked the way he spoke.

It's mellow yet smooth.

Like jazz.

"I asked China to extend the 1 hour travel outside the academy for us and he agreed to give us 2 so we better make the most of it" Malaysia explained and I nodded.

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8 : 30 am [Italy, Venice: Lazaretto nuovo]

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"Ohhhhhh!!!!!!! It's Italy!!!!" Indonesia and Malaysia exclaimed and took a group picture with Egypt and Israel upon stepping down.

"signora, I'm so glad you could make it, the heaven definitely gave you a safe passage" he bowed and kiss the back of my hand.

I bowed slightly as well "I'm glad we did, I'm philipia"

Suddenly he kneels down "greetings country leader Philippines, my name is Venice, I am one of the cities of Sir Italy's country"

"Nice to meet you"

"Woah! That's so awesome!" I hear Israel and everyone else in the background.

It's like we're tourist on vacation.

"You have arrived in lazaretto nuovo, and I shall be your guide for today, my master told me to let you roam around as much as you want, and for today, it is only you country leaders visiting"

"Ah, thank you"

"So this is Lazaretto" Indonesia said behind me as he placed his chin on my left shoulder.

"It's supposedly an abandoned island now"

Abandoned...

"Yes it is but, tourist still come" Venice smiled and lead the way.

"So, now that we're here, what do we do? What are we searching for exactly?"

Here...

Now that I think about it, I never told Italy that it would be in

Lazaretto... So how did he know?

"Oh, that's the building" Israel whistled with his eyes squinted a little, looking at the distant where an abandoned looking building stands.

We got in and you can tell the place has been here for a long time.

The walls had multiple cracks, the rooms were empty, and it had an eerie feeling.

But all in all, one could also tell they have been taking care if it.

I can almost smell the tragic history here, but if course, no one so allowed to talk about it, that's why Venice is only here and observing us instead of telling us what the story it had.

"Mongrel, take a picture of me here" Egypt said to which Indonesia did.

I walked deeper inside the place and the long hallway was somewhat familiar, as if I've been here before.

Weird, it feels like I know where I'm going... My feet are walking on their own.

"Huh?..." I snapped back and looked around me.

"Angel?"

I jumped a little bit when Israel came out from behind me "oh, Israel" I chuckled.

"What's wrong? I was following you and it seems like you zoned out a bit"

I massage the temple of my head "really?"

He click his tongue and cross his arms on his chest "see? This is why you should be resting!"

I shake my hand "no, no, it's okay, I'm okay"

He didn't seem convinced but he let it slide.

"So? What were we looking again?"

"Uhmm..."

"You can't be serious that you just wanted to travel?"

I shake my head in response "no, it's just, I feel like I know where I'm supposed to look... But I think I just need something..."

I perked up when I saw a huge block of rock from the cracked wall on the floor.

"Hey, what are you..."

I raised it on top of my head and aimed on the floor in the middle of the room I'm in.

"Hngh!!"

I smashed it down and it made a huge crack on the floor.

"Hey! What happened?!" The rest of them came running in from that loud sound I made.

"signora?" Venice came in as well.

"Ah! I think she accidentally broke the floor? I'll pay for it...?" Malaysia raised his hands, looking at Venice nervously.

He looks at them with no reaction "I don't think signora would accidentally do that, I was told you can do whatever you want, even breaking anything" he smiled.

"Huh? Italy did?" Malaysia almost didn't buy it.

Venice nodded "yes, and I was also ordered to bring a shove--"

"It's deep..." I cut him off and they all turn to me.

While they were talking, I was already removing the cracked parts of the floor, and beneath it is a soil.

I guess this room was added without even thinking of putting the foundation anymore.

I mean, if you're dealing with patients during a plague and there aren't enough rooms, of course you'd just want to add another part while you're at it.

I dug up the soil with my bare hands and didn't even realize how deep it was...

"Here's a shovel, signora" Venice hands me a shovel but Israel immediately took it.

"I'll dig" he sternly said before Egypt takes my soiled stained hands and poured water on it with his water bottle.

"I'll just have to keep digging right?" Israel asked, rolling his sleeves and giving his things to Malaysia.

I nodded "yes, please..."

"Alright"

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It's been exactly an hour now and the small hole became large and deep.

"Hey" Israel stood to catch his breath "what exactly am I supposed to look for? A corpse?"

His face had now smudges of dirt.

"Yeah, Israel and I have been digging for a while now, and it feels discouraging when we don't know what we're looking for" Malaysia added who also joined to help him dig not long after.

"Uhmm... I'm not sure..."

"Anuket, we came all this way to dig, and if we don't know what it is, then it's best if we leave now, we only have an hour left"

I turn to Venice who's still standing by the door since earlier.

I bite my lower and didn't respond.

"Okay, that's enough let's just go now, let's come back next time– oh, is it okay if we come back tomorrow?" Indonesia stood up.

Venice nodded "I was ordered to do what you ask for"

"Great! just come back tomorrow, I smell like dirt"

Israel and Malaysia climbed out of the hole they dug up and started dusting themselves.

I know it's near, I know they're close but I don't even know what it is...

But my gut tells me so.

"Come on, angel" Israel said and I nodded.

Israel, Malaysia and Indonesia walked out of the room to find a place where they can clean themselves up quickly.

Egypt stayed behind with me "anuket?"

"How deep did they dug again?"

He walked closer to the hole and crouched down "hmmm, from here, I can estimate about 7 feet deep? Deeper than the average length to bury a coffin" he explained "but if they dug even more it would be exactly 8 feet"

I took a deep breath and removed my skirt.

"Wha- anuket! Not here! Someone could see us..."

"Hump!" I jumped down after taking one shovel.

"Huh?"

It's more comfortable in shorts when doing hard labor.

"That's good, wearing shorts while wearing skirt– wait, that's not the point here! Anuket!" Egypt called yet I still continued digging.

"Yes?"

"Get out of there, didn't you hear what those mongrels said? Let's do it tomorrow!"

"I did"

"So, why are you still digging?"

"Because I feel like I can almost find it"

"*It*? Are you even sure it's a *thing*?!" Egypt sighs "anuket, there's a limit to being determined and simply hard headed!"

"Uh huh, but, if Egypt won't help me, it will take even a longer time"

"What?" He huffs "I am a pharaoh! I do not dig such filthy soils! I have dignity as a king!"

"I see, but did you know, Egypt" I stop and look up at him.

"What?"

"Martin Luther king..."

"King?!" He gasped.

"He once said this '*all labor has dignity*' and it's called the king's legac--"

"I'm in!" Egypt didn't even think twice and slides down with a shovel and started digging as well.

I giggled and amused that he took the bait.

As we kept digging, I suddenly hit something hard "huh?"

"What's wrong?"

"I hit something" I said and kneeled down, digging it up with my hands.

"Is that..." Egypt takes his phone and used a flashlight on it.

We both look at each other and I smiled "I told you!" I laughed and started digging it out.

He rolls his eyes "okay anuket, you win"

"Hey! Angel! Egypt! What the hell did I tell you?!" Israel exclaimed who came back, half naked and a bit drenched. The smudges of dirt gone too.

"We found a treasure!" Egypt yelled.

"Whoah! Seriously?!" Malaysia beams. And pops behind Israel.

"Nevermind that! go and help them"

We were able to take the box out of ground and pull it out.

They helped us climbed up and dusted some dirt off of me.

"Angel, seriously, we take our eyes off of you one second and the next thing we know you're doing something stupid, you're still in the middle of recovering!" Israel scolds.

"I know but, I just really wanted to find it"

"How did you even know this thing existed down there?" Indonesia asked as he examined the box on the ground.

"I don't know, I just felt it...?"

They look at me strange to which I simply returned it with a smile.

Since we were done with our purpose there, Venice offered to fix the hole we dug and let us rest for a while.

There was a van waiting outside that's for us and a small tent to take a shade in for a while.

I cleaned myself up (I wasn't really that dirty) before sitting down and remove the dirt covering the box.

"It's almost identical to the box your father had" Malaysia said to which I agreed.

It really was identical but it was still different.

The only difference is that it doesn't have a puzzle, just a keyhole, and I think I know where the key is.

"Aren't you gonna open it?" Israel asked while eating a sandwich.

I take the small key from my bag before inserting it in the keyhole.

Twisting it, it made a small click and it opened.

"Ohhh~ it's smells so earthy" Indonesia comments as we took a peek inside.

"Another key and two papers" I said.

But unlike the first one, this one was visible and it wasn't hidden.

"What is it?"

"It's another coordinate" I said and showed it to Malaysia.

He takes the paper and starts typing on to his phone.

"Wow, it really does feel like we're on a treasure hunt, sadly we have to go back for about an hour"

I nodded at Indonesia.

"How did you found out about this place again?" Israel asked.

"The paper that was in my father's box actually had a hidden message, and I found out about it accidentally" I explained.

He hummed in response "I guess your dad's is a mysterious guy"

I giggled "sort of? I mean, he does look like the type to hide a secret but I don't think he ever did..."

Suddenly, an old yet distinct memory came to me.

Papa was talking to a woman with dark clothes...

I blinked a few times when I felt my head throb "oh..."

"Whoah, you okay? Did I somehow trigger a memory?" Israel worriedly asked.

I shake my head "oh no, you didn't... I'm okay"

"Got it" We turn to Malaysia who showed us his phone "40.8008830, -73.8976864 is the *north brothers island"*

"Joe's country..."

"Welp, then I guess it's time to go back"

"Okay" I placed the paper back in the box and realized I didn't get to read the second letter.

'*45 steps forward, 3 steps right, 12 steps left'*

What an odd yet familiar way of guide.

Reminds me something but I can't seem to recall what or where.

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I got out of the shower and changed into a nighttime attire.

Flopping down on my bed, I realized how exhausting today was

but...

It was worth it.

I glance over to the box on my study table before approaching it.

"Papa... Just where are you trying to take me? What are you trying to say?..." I mumbled and closed it back.

"Oh right, I still have to ask Joe"

Getting out of my room, I walked out the hallway and noticed that the lounge is empty, they must've been tired and are now retired in their room.

"I'll go to his room instead"

I could always text him but, I heard that Laurasia threw my phone when she took me.

Now that reminds me, I wonder how she is now? She looked terrible when Tethys came in the room that time.

Almost like she had a seizure.

"Yeah, yeah..."

I perked when I saw a glimpse of Joe entering the elevator and it closes.

"Ah, joe! Oh... He's gone"

I ran up to the elevator and pressed the button; I bite my lower lip and saw that it stopped on the first floor.

Heading towards the emergency exit, I ran down the stairs all the way to the first floor.

This is much faster. When I arrived, I could still hear his voice.

He was standing by the vending machine right infront of the entrance, facing the glass door and on the phone.

I almost called him but it's rude to talk to someone on the phone, I should wait when he's done.

"That was just one time okay? So please stop calling, you're really bothering me"

Is it a fight?

"Shh!"

"Mhhn!"

Suddenly, J appeared behind me and covered my mouth.

I relaxed when I realized it was just him "it's just you"

"You here to eavesdrop too?"

I blinked a few times "eavesdrop? Oh! No, I'm just waiting for him to end his call, I wanted to ask him about something"

He grins and peeked at the corner "well, I am, it sounds like a gossip for me hehehehehe"

"That's not nice J"

He scoffs "oh hush, I'm sure you're curious who the hook up girl he's talking to"

I tilt my head to the side "hookup?"

"Ya know, like a girl who you sleep with one time"

"Sleep?"

He thinks for a second before he leans close and whispered "to have sex with"

"Ohhh"

"That's a lame reaction, usually anyone would be flustered"

I giggled "well, Joe is a man so it's natural for him to release every

now and then, besides it's good for the body"

J looks at me rather skeptical before snorting "you really are weird, but still, this is like his 25th hook up--"

"No one is hooking up with anybody!"

"Eek!!! Ah, j-joe what, a, co-in-ci-dence~"

Joe stood there before him with hands crossed and glaring at J.

"Was it your hookup girl Joe?" I asked.

Suddenly, J burst into a laughter and Joe's face turned flushed red.

"Hmm?"

"N-no!"

"HAHAHHAHAHAHAH!!!!"

Joe stomps his feet and grabbed J by the collar, but J still kept laughing "it's all your fault! What were you teaching her?!"

"Hey~ it's better to know otherwise she'll get taken advantage off!"

Joe gritted his teeth "oh yeah? How bout I take advantage of you?"

"Gasp~ you even hit men? You really are the land of the free"

"Philipia, it's not what you think it is! That was– the person I was calling was just some unimportant person!"

I blinked a few times, Joe's words were starting to stammer too.

Maybe what I said was embarrassing for him and it's a guy thing...?

Like how talking about period is embarrassing for girls.

I should reassure him in a friendly way. "It's okay, I don't mind if you're pent up and wanted release"

"HAHAHHA! PENT UP! HAHAHAH!" J was now coughing and

wheezing from laughter.

"It's not that!"

"You sound like a man caught cheating, Joe" J teased.

"H-hey!"

J shrugs and wrapped an arm around me "but it's okay, we understand you, right philipia?"

"Yep" I nodded

Joe sighs and shakes his head "whatever, but it's really not it"

"Kayyy~" J snickered.

"Anyways, what were the two of you doing here?"

"Oh me? I'm here to eavesdrop"

"Of course you are"

I raised my hand "I actually came here to ask permission"

"Oh?"

Joe smiled "sure, what is it?"

"Well it's just, I wanted to ask if I could go to a specific place in your country"

They both look at each other "sure but, aren't you supposed to rest this week? I heard about what happened"

"Well yes, but, I just have something to do there, please?"

"Hahaha, if you plead to me in such an adorable way, I can't say no"

"Philipia! You can visit my country too!"

I giggled "I'd love to"

Joe opens his phone again "tell me which place you'd like to go"

"Oh it's uhh the north brothers island...?"

Joe paused and look at me "that's an abandoned place, it's uninhabited and mostly birds live there"

I nodded "yes but, I just have too...?"

"Hmm, well, I'm not sure what you're gonna do there but okay" he continues to type with one hand as well.

"What are you gonna do there philipia?" J asked.

"Oh uhm, I'm actually looking for something there, like I'm in a treasure hunt" I explained.

Joe press his phone to his lips "treasure hunt huh, I'd love to go with you but"

"We still have that test with Professor Reich"

They look at each other with a depressed look.

A test, I'd love to take it and it makes me anxious that I'm the only one not taking it.

"Regardless, I already told D.C so he can guide you and greet you there"

"Oh and also, one more thing?"

"Yeah?

I hope he'll agree and since I'm not sure if I would be doing the same thing we did back at Italy's place.

"Can I break a part of the place?"

"Break? Why?"

"Well, it's just, like, I'm on a treasure hunt so I'm not sure where I would be able to find it, I could find it inside the walls or maybe

underground?"

Joe snorted and pats my head "hahahha sure! Break anything there you're free to do so, I'll remind D.C"

Thank goodness he didn't think it would be weird.

"Thank you, Joe"

"Don't mention it"

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10 : 30 am [USA, NYC: North brothers island]

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"There sure are a lot of birds" Malaysia said as they all got down from the chopper that France let me borrow again.

Indonesia whistled when we saw the building that gives off this rich history.

But of course, you can't really talk about it's history when the country leader of this country cannot even remember it.

"I was told you can do anything you want" D.C spoke besides me.

I nodded "yes, thank you"

"Are we here for another treasure again?" Egypt asked while holding a shovel with determined eyes.

I guess what I said yesterday really struck him.

"Yeah"

"Good, let's go"

We walked towards the abandoned buildings that looks like nature is almost swallowing it.

We entered inside and of course, a bunch of birds came flying and scattered around.

"Whoah! One of them almost poop on me!" Israel exclaimed and takes out his umbrella to which the rest of them take cover as well.

"There's a lot of buildings here, how would you know which one?" Malaysia asked.

I shrugged "I feel like I'll know"

"Again? So you really were just following your intuition" Malaysia replied.

My intuition?

No, it's more than that... It feels more like it's telling me; something is telling me where it is...

I turn to D.C who's walking behind us "uhm, is there a garden here?"

He blinked a few times "well, there was once a garden here but I'm not sure if you can still call it one"

"Can you please take us there?"

He nodded and lead the way.

"Angel, have you been here before?" Israel whispered.

I shake my head "no, I never really left my country before, so this feels weird for me too; the feeling like I know where it is and the feeling as if it's not my first time here"

He hums in response "hmmm..."

We walked even more and was able to see the other abandoned buildings.

Some were already a wreck and some were conquered by vegetation and nature, the whole building was swallowed by it.

And some are already part of a tree and can no longer be accessible due to it having a possibility falling apart.

"We're here"

D.C lead us to another building with a gate with it.

And of course, there were vines and leaves everywhere.

We walked around the huge building and there was a garden that is left unattended (obviously)

"Whoah, it's an abandoned fountain, this is sick" Malaysia and Indonesia took a picture with it and Egypt took a picture of the flowers growing around.

"So? What now?" Israel asked while looking around.

I swallowed and walked towards the huge tree at the very corner.

"Here..."

For some reason, it feels like this tree wasn't as big as it was before.

Before...?

"Hey Egypt! It's digging time" Israel called.

"Is it gonna be deep like before?"

They turn to me "I'm not sure but, I feel like it won't be as deep before"

"Well, if angel says so"

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They began digging and it didn't take long when Israel found

something.

"Another box" he said and gave it to us.

"That was fast" Malaysia comments and pulled it close to us.

Egypt climbed up with the help of Indonesia and Israel simply climbed up easily.

"It's exactly 5 feet deep" Egypt said.

I kneeled before the box and take out the key I got from the first box we found.

Inserting it, it made a click and opened.

"Is it another key and paper?" Malaysia asked who's bending besides me.

I nodded and gave him the first paper with the same type of numbers.

I look back to the second one and it only has this number at the corner.

Now that I think about it, the first one also has numbers on the corner of it...

Is it connected?

Well, I can't worry about this, I'll find it out afterwards.

"Where does it say?" I asked.

Malaysia showed me his phone "71.2394980, -53.5084944, illorsuit"

Israel perked up "greenland" he said.

I checked the time on his phone and stood up "we still have time, I feel like we're getting close" I said and packed up everything in the box.

"Wait! Slow down angel!" Israel steps infront of me "exactly what are we getting close at? I mean, maybe this could be something dangerous"

I shake my head "if it is, my father won't take me to this place"

"Are you even sure it's your father who's leading you to it?"

"Who else would even led me here? It all started from his belongings!"

They were quiet, I may have raised my voice but I feel so desperate to find it– or whatever '*it*' even is.

Egypt sighs "okay, I'll go with you"

"Egypt!" Israel scolds.

"Mongrel, this is why we're here with her, besides, unlike yesterday, we were able to find it, and we still have 2 hours left"

Malaysia sighs as well "I'll go"

"Same, we're here anyways" Indonesia added.

Israel massages both side of his head "okay, okay, let's just go there immediately and go home and you rest!"

I nodded "yes"

He groaned "okay, let's go"

"I will go ahead and inform country leader Greenland of your arrival" D.C suggests.

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11 : 45 am [Greenland: illorsuit]

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"Welcome!"

When we arrived and got off the chopper, country leader Greenland greeted us with a wide smile.

"H-hello country leader, Greenland" I greeted.

"Ohhh! Goody! How marvelous! I never really get any visitors often! This is soooo superb!" He jumps in excitement.

"I like his enthusiasm" Egypt smiles.

"What can I do for you fellow leaders? Why come all the way here in illorsuit? There's really nothing to see here!～" He explains with a curious look.

Somehow, he reminds me of a little boy who's curious about everything.

"We're not exactly sure either" Malaysia replies and they all turn their heads to me.

"Uhm! C-can we look around?"

He blinks a few times before giggling with a huge grin "hahahahah! ～ sure! Be my guest! But like I said, there's nothing really fun in this part"

"Hey, the population... Is 0" Indonesia shows us his phone.

Greenland turns to us and chuckled nervously "it's a very dangerous place now so the people who once lived here are gone, I moved them somewhere safer" he explained.

"I see"

"Anyways, whatcha want here?" He asked Israel.

Israel shrugs "ask her" he points me.

I was about to answer before Egypt steps in and shows him his

shovel "we're on a treasure hunt! And we've been looking for clues"

"Ohhhh! A treasure hunt?! Sounds so fun oh goody!"

"He's right though" I hear Malaysia say while looking around the place "all you can see is this huge water"

"The house's of the residents is still here though" Indonesia replies.

"Yeah but, it seems to me like, there is something else that keeps happening here"

I look around the place more and noticed that ice and snow kept piling on the houses before it would melt from the mild sun.

I slide my hand on one of the fence of the house and examined the snow.

"This is recent..." I muttered.

"Anyways! Have you guys found what you were looking for?" Greenland asked.

They all turn to me "I want to look around more" I said and they all nodded.

I walked close to the water and saw how tranquil it was.

"Philipia"

I turn to Indonesia "yes?"

"It looks like you're in deep thought"

"I am?"

"You can't feel where the other box it supposed to be?"

I shake my head in response "it feels faded..."

"What are you a beacon?"

I chuckled "right now, yes- I do feel like one"

"Look at that slope, this could be dangerous if there's a landfall" malaysia takes a picture of the place.

I turn back around and noticed Greenland tapping his feet and checking his watch over and over again.

Is he in a hurry?

Well, he must've been disturbed since we came here in his country all of a sudden.

"Have you found it?" He asked when I approached him.

I'll try looking next time...

"No, but I'll come back next time" I said.

"Goody~ alrighty then"

As we started to head back, the sky slowly turned gray.

"The water is moving and it's... Retreating?" Malaysia spoke which caught all our attention.

"A-ahhh! It's best if we go now!" He warned and started running to the chopper.

"What exactly is happening?" Israel asked.

"The reason why this place has 0 population is the everyday snow storm it has, almost everyday people die because it's too cold or they get caught up with the wind and water" he explained nervously.

We didn't even think twice when we ran to the chopper when the sky started to get darker and darker.

Thunder started to rumble and the water slowly kept retreating as if a tsunami is approaching.

"Huh..." I stop and look back on the water again.

There it is... The feeling of where it is became strong, earlier it was

faded but now...

I think I know where it is.

"Philipia!"

"Anuket! It's dangerous!"

"Ohhhh no!!! Leader! Please don't go!"

I ran back to the water before Malaysia stopped me halfway "don't be reckless! Are you trying to get yourself killed?!"

"Step aside Malaysia! I know where it is now!"

"Why didn't you know earlier?!"

"Because...!" I turn to the water that's still retreating "because it was being covered by the water..."

"What?!"

"Just move and I'll find it!"

"Philipia! Stop it already!"

I yanked my hand away and still ran towards the water.

"It's dangerous angel!"

"The water is below 0 degree! She might freeze to death!"

I remove my shirt since it will get in the way before stepping in.

I shiver when it hit me how cold it is.

"Just a little more... Just a little..."

I waited for a few more for the water to keep retreating before I found the spot that I feel like it's there.

I kneeled down and started digging with my bare hands.

"Philipia watch out!"

Suddenly the water that retreated came back.

Since I walked at the deepest part, the place was engulfed in darkness and water almost immediately.

Swimming back down to where I was digging, I fought with the strong current underwater and continued.

Come on... I can feel it.

It's just here...

"Mnhn!!"

When I got a hold of something hard, I immediately grabbed it and pulled it out and this time, I let the current push me back all the way to the shore.

"Angel!"

"Anuket!!"

"Philipiaaaa!!!!"

I gasped and resurfaced before swimming back to them.

The snow storm and the wind was already covering the whole place yet they still stayed behind.

"There she is!!!"

Malaysia ran up to me and swept me off my feet, carrying me bridal style and running back towards the chopper that's already ready for take off.

I got in and they gave me a blanket.

"That was reckless leader" Greenland worriedly said.

"FOR ONCE ANGEL, STOP PUTTING YOURSELF IN DANGER!"

Israel yelled as he held both my shoulders, making sure I'm facing him.

He was panting heavily and his hold tighten around me.

"For the love of god, stop doing reckless things on your own...!"

I look over to Malaysia who's slumped on the floor, drenched and shivering from the cold.

"I'm sorry..."

"Sorry isn't enough!" Malaysia exclaimed, slamming his fist "sorry isn't enough for what you caused, for something this stupid? You'd risk your life?"

I didn't answer.

"We can always find a way how to retrieve it we can always go back tomorrow or the next day or how many times when it's safe and the place is calm not... Not like this...!"

His expression was hurt and... Sad.

"Stop being so selfish philipia, it's not cute..."

I bite my lower lip and nodded.

He sighs and dry himself "let's go back now, and if there's still another treasure shit, I'm not going anymore..."

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12:00 am [room 3]

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I stayed in my room and recall what happened.

Have I been selfish?

I don't know.

It's just that, I felt so desperate to find it.

I look at my hand where the wound I got earlier has now healed.

I sigh and hug a pillow.

"I can't sleep..."

Glancing at the box at my study table, I got off the bed and approached it.

I opened it and what was inside was surprisingly dry and not even a drop of water.

I guess this box was well made.

I went ahead and take a look and the only thing that was inside is a single paper with a number at the corner like the other two.

What was the first letter I got again?

I took the first and placed it on the table, putting them all besides each other.

Is this supposed to be a puzzle?

"Hmm..."

I sat down and stare at the papers on my desk, trying to decipher it with what I can guess.

But no good, when it comes to this, it's brother who usually is able to solve it.

I can't ask Malaysia either, the moment we got off the chopper, he walked away with Indonesia and Israel.

I guess they were really mad at me although I don't know why...

I sighed and stood up before stacking the papers but as I did, I noticed something.

The paper was thin, it was thin enough that the paper underneath it is a bit visible and the same pattern was somehow forming a word with it.

I took the three papers and raised it up to where the light can hit them.

"This is...!"

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"AHHHHH!!!!!!! I'm so stupid! Why did I say such a cruel thing?!" I slammed my head on the table after gulping down a glass of beer that I lost count drinking.

Indonesia sighed "because you were worried and angry?" He said.

I sobbed "yeah but... What I said was really uncool! It was so heartless of me! Wahhhhhh!!!" I cried again.

After leaving the chopper, I immediately left and went here at this bar where we got drunk before.

"Israel do something" Indonesia said.

Israel shrugs and still looking gloomy as we left. He also felt bad that for what he did.

"I called her selfish... Even though she's been doing things for everyone and she only wanted something for herself this time..." I sobbed again.

"You should apologize"

"No! But... Well, yeah, but! No! Philipia has to learn to depend on us!"

Israel sighs and leans on the table, pouring himself a glass and took a shot.

"We can't blame her if she's like that, since the people she depended on all left her before" he said.

"But, it's different!"

"Tell me, is it easy to remove a doubt from someone when they've gone through something much worse all by themselves?"

Me and Indonesia glance at each other and shake our heads.

"She did survive that incident with Laurasia and it didn't even traumatized her" Indonesia mumbled.

Israel nodded.

"That's exactly how angel feels right now, and besides, it was us who forced to come with her, so basically we were in the way"

I slam my hand on the table once more "we weren't! If it wasn't for us we wouldn't be able to find those stupid boxes!"

He massage his temple "look! What I'm trying to say is that this is the first time angel had been so determined to find something - even if she doesn't even know what it is; it's still rare for her to really want something, and now, because she wants to find it, she's desperate, and yet the people around her called her selfish and reckless"

"Which she is" Indonesia stated.

"I know, but because of that it makes her feel bad to the point that whenever she would want something she won't be able to say it because of the response of the people around her"

Indonesia hums "is that why people often take advantage of her?"

"That is why people take advantage of her" he repeated.

I blinked a few times and slumped on my seat "but what can I do? My emotions took over me, I was scared and... I thought I'd lose her"

Israel took another shot again "it just shows how much we care and doubt her"

"Doubt her? I don't!"

"We doubt her abilities, we doubt her skills..."

I was about to say something but closed my mouth instead.

"Do we?..." Indonesia asked and turn to me "now that Israel said so, I think we do..."

"Remember, angel is a soldier, perhaps she did got cold, but at that time, it didn't hurt, so it means she had high tolerance"

"You didn't feel cold?" Indonesia asked Israel.

He shook his head "I did a little but, Greenland said that water was 0 degrees, anyone would drow anf freeze to death upon contact if you're not a royal..."

I sigh "then I was wrong to worry?" I gesture the bartender to give me another bottle.

"No, we weren't but, it was wrong of us to think that she would kill herself to find something– that's not how angel is, because even on that moment, she was thinking about me and the people in line..."

"How do you know?"

Israel placed his hand on his chest "I can tell..."

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We got out of the bar with Indonesia carrying me over his shoulder and Israel around his hip.

"Damnnnnn itttt!!!! Both of you sober up already!!!!!!" He groaned while pulling our heavy and drunken body out.

I sobbed and cried for the 100th time "wahhhhh!!!!! Philipia hates me now! I'm sure of it!!!!!!! AHHHHH!!!!!!"

Suddenly, Indonesia dropped me and pressed his foot on my chest "snap out of it! Philipia wouldn't do that! She doesn't hate people!"

"That's right! Angel is a real angel! That it made me consider joining Germany!"

Indonesia removed his feet off my chest and faced Israel "No! Israel! Snap out of it! Think about your sanity!!! Think about your future you drunken holy fucker!" Indonesia slapped Israel left and right but Israel didn't react.

I sigh when I noticed France's chopper flying away from the academy "is France going somewhere?" I asked whilst I see two choppers.

Ahh, I drank too much I see multiple Indonesia as well.

"What?" He turn to me, so did Israel.

I point towards the sky where the chopper is "there"

They all followed where I was pointing.

"Huh, who knows... Wait– didn't philipia borrowed France's chopper?"

We all stayed there for a second, processing what he said.

"AH! ANGEL!" Israel jumped and grabbed Indonesia on both shoulders "she left again!!!!!! That's her! I can tell!!!!!"

I gasped and forced my heavy body before grabbing Indonesia by his left leg "Indo!!!!! Philipia is leaving! We have to chase after her!!!"

"Idiots! Let go of me! Weren't you the one who said you wouldn't go with her anymore?!"

"It's all my fault!!!!!! AHHHHH!!!! Philipia!!!!!!"

"Let gooo!!!"

"We have to go after her! She could've gone on her own!" Israel shouts while shaking Indonesia.

"It doesn't matter, she already left and we don't know where she could've gone, and even if we try to search for the codes and coordinate from the boxes, I'm sure she has it with her!" He explained, struggling from the both of us.

"But! But! Who's with her then?!" I asked, climbing on his leg.

Indonesia breaths in heavily and grabbed my head "I don't know! Either Egypt or Germany!"

"Germany?! Germs!!!???" Israel grabbed Indonesia again by the shoulder and made him face him.

"He's a freak! A cult leader! Why him?!"

"I don't know I'm just guessing! And stop shaking me! Weren't you the one considering joining his club 2 seconds ago?!"

"That was 2 seconds ago! Stop thinking about the past and start planning for the future!"

"I said!–"

Suddenly, Indonesia step right to the middle of Israel, pushing his hips up pulling him over the top and slamming him on the ground.

"– stop shaking me!!!!"

I swear... I heard a crack...

Indonesia huffs whilst Israel stayed on his position, probably, unconscious – or dead.

I flinched and released Indonesia's leg when he turn to me "eek! S-sorry Indo!!!!"

He sighed and placed one hand on his hip "look, we can't do anything about it, let's just let her be. It's her life so we can't get in her way, we'll help her if she needs one and we'll support her when not!"

I nodded, finally sobering up.

"You sober now?!" He asked while cracking his knuckles.

"I'm sober! I'm okay! I'm okay!!!"

"Good! Now help me up!" He said and crouched down to place Israel's arm on his shoulder and I did the same to the other.

I glance at the sky to where the chopper was earlier and nowhere to be seen now.

Philipia...

Just be careful please, I'll wait for you...

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< < < End of chapter 13 : Treasure hunt...?

> > > Coming Chapter 14 : A secret buried in the past.

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Fact : Athena loves philipia more.

Fact 2 : A leader can only be baptized in their country.

Fact 3 : Philipia's grandmother's name was named Hanan

Fact 4 : Greg's final stage of baptism was in Pangaea.

Fact 5 : The principal's of the two academy are brothers and sisters.

Fact 6 : To be accepted as a teacher in Pangaea, one must give up the thirst for power and war.

Fact 7 : Laos and Cosmos formed their own club.

Fact 8 : Sabah was one of the female states attending.

Fact 9 : Laurasia and Gondwanda just got out of the asylum.

Fact 10 : You can't love someone when you don't love yourself.

[Heyaaaaa ! I know it's been such a long time since I last updated but, here I am!]

[I know many of you have been expecting my updates and I'm sorry to disappoint everyone! πˆπ]

[I was really in a bad state and I think I had a bit of depression before due to the stress in school and in the house πˆπ]

[But I'm okay now~]

[Hopefully, I'll be able to finish another chapter next week, I gotta make it up for you all, since you've been good and waited for me >\\<]

[Anyways, I hope you enjoyed the chapter and see ya on the next one lovies ~~]

[Much love ~]

..--- / .-- . . -.- ...

Chapter 14 : A secret buried in the past

[image]
[image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy ~]

_____

"this is...?"

My eyes widen when I finally solved the puzzle.

Stacking the corners of the paper where the numbers are; I arranged them and it formed another coordinate.

"Go to...14.1353935, 121.201938..."

I squinted my eyes to see the faded last number a little better.

Though it was really faded due to long age, but I can still make it out a little bit.

"...3?"

I blinked softly and sat back down on my bed. Just where is papa trying to take me? Why does it feel like this coordinate is the last one?

And why is my heart thumping really fast?

"More importantly, how am I gonna find out where this is when I don't have a phone?"

I placed my hand on my chin and think. I don't want to drag anyone

in trouble anymore and it's best if I go alone like I always do...

Yes... Like we always do.

I held my forehead when I hear filip talking.

Groaning a little bit, I blinked a few times and breath in.

I don't want to be hated by my friends, they're the only salvation I have when I'm in my worse state.

Getting up– I held the paper close to my chest and exit my room. Obviously Malaysia, Indonesia and Israel aren't home yet– though I have no idea where they are.

As soon as we arrived in Pangaea from Greenland's, they left.

Malaysia and Israel looked very angry at that time, though I was still confused on what I did.

Or maybe I just didn't get why they would be so worried about me. I've been doing much dangerous things on my own...

Walking out of the inner hall, Germany was sitting on the dining area while workimg on his laptop.

"Germany" I softly called.

He paused and turn his head to me "ah goddess, is something the matter?" He asked, his body fully facing me.

I look down and fumble on the paper "I uhm, is it okay if I could borrow your phone? I promise it'll be quick I just have to--"

"No problem, goddess"

I wasn't able to even finish my sentence when Germany already hands me his phone without hesitation.

Usually he doesn't like anyone holding or even peeking on his phone. I'm aware due to Israel teasing him a lot about it by peeking through his phone when he's texting, Germany would get very

angry about it.

But why now?

"Is it really okay?" I asked once more to make sure.

He looks at me firmly and nodded.

I was still unsure so I took his phone slowly like I'm trying to approach a snake.

When he really did hand me his phone and went back to his laptop, I was dumbfounded for a second.

He was really serious about letting me borrow it.

"Uhh... T-thanks" I softly said and he hummed in response.

I turned his phone on and it showed me his lock screen "uhm, Germany?what's the password?" I asked and showed him the locked screen.

He perks up before taking his phone and typing something on it.

I guess he still value his privacy.

"Give me your finger" he asked, which I followed.

He takes my pointer finger and started pressing it on the back of the phone. I didn't even know there was a small hole that's enough to fit a finger on the back.

"There we go, whenever you want my phone or even want to borrow it, just press your pointer finger here and it'll open"

He demonstrates it and it awed me that it easily opened when I press my finger on the back..

"Whoah, that's so cool!" I eagerly said

Germany coughs "only you can open it though so... D-don't tell anyone Goddess, I beg" he said while running his nape and looking away, cheeks flushed in red.

I shake my hands "oh no! Of course I won't you don't have to beg Germany!"

He chuckled and takes my right hand before kissing the back of it "goddess is really kind..."

Somehow, there's a different air around Germany.

Though I noticed he only acts like this when it's just us two.

"Now then, ask me if there's anymore you want to ask I'll give you literally anything"

I nodded and he went back to his work.

I was still struggling a little but, I saw how Malaysia did it and I hope I was right on what I'm doing.

Okay, first he went to '*geegle*' then he typed the coordinates...

"Oh..."

Tapping the '*mep*' it showed me exactly the location.

"Isn't this..."

Germany noticed my shocked expression. He stood up and stand behind me, looking through what I just searched.

"That is an island"

I nodded "it is... It's **Maria makiling**"

I gave the phone back to Germany with a worried and confused feeling.

"Thank you, Germany..."

"No problem, but are you okay goddess?" He leans down to see my face while holding my right shoulder.

I look at Germany and shake my head "I feel strange, Germany"

"Why?" He leans close and pressed my forehead to his, eyes locked in mine "tell me anything, goddess..."

"I feel scared and I feel at lost. Somehow, I don't think I won't like what I will find in that place"

"How will you know when you haven't even checked?"

I shrugged.

I leaned close to Germany, hands on his chest and buried my face on it. I can smell a faint scent of coffee from him.

I felt his hand wrap around me and place itself on my back "goddess, you're trembling"

I shake my head.

"You don't know why?"

I nodded.

"How about I come with you? I heard about what happened with you and Malaysia and Israel back at Greenland's country"

Ah, so he already know.

I felt bad that I troubled Greenland and felt even bad when I ignored his warnings.

He just didn't want to give a bad impression, he didn't mean to hide the fact that the place we were in actually had a very dangerous weather.

And because of it Malaysia and Israel both got mad at me, it was really surprising yet painful at the same time.

But I made sure - whilst I was under water - that I wouldn't get cold for Israel's sake.

After all, brother did taught me how to increase my tolerance on cold and hot temperature.

"I'm sorry..." Was what I whispered.

I feel Germany heaves out heavily, his chest raising and falling before his hand started stroking the back of my head.

"It was never your fault, I was never really worried because the goddess is a strong person"

I smiled underneath his shirt "thank you..." I separate myself and look at him "it made me feel relieved"

He nodded proudly "of course– anyways, about going to that place?"

I perked up "oh, yes, we can use France's chopper, he allowed me to use it whenever I want"

Germany suddenly gasped as if what he heard was unbelievable.

"That's unbelievable!"

Ah, he said it.

"Why let you '*borrow*' it?! He should've given it!" He clicked his tongue in frustration "preposterous! I cannot believe he would let such a thing!"

All of a sudden, he grabbed both my shoulders "goddess! Just say the word! Your wish is my command! I'll offer you 5 no– 10! Choppers!"

I blinked a few times a little taken aback but, Germany is offering me a chopper!

Should I exchange it for guns? Does he likes guns? Wait, how much is 10 choppers?

I don't think I can afford it.

"It's okay Germany, I already have 1"

"1?! Goddess! I'll give you 10! It's for free!!"

Free...!!!??

"Deal"

"No backsies, you can't give it back either"

I nodded, quite interested and hooked at free 10 choppers!

I could use it for military defense or air surveillance if needed, or maybe we could sell one for our country's budget!

Free is nice...

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After a few minutes of talking about choppers and tanks (which he also offered me halfway)

We prepared a short necessary things for a quick travel.

Though, it's already nighttime, we decided to just sneak out.

"Goddess, there are teachers on night patrol on the east section, but it won't be a good idea to leave with the chopper at the school departure area" Germany whispered while he's cautiously looking left and right while leaned on the corridor.

Although we're still on the floor where our dorm room is, so I couldn't understand why he's wary.

"Should I ask France to move his chopper real quick at the city public departure area?"

He turns to look at me before pressing the button "but that would make him suspicious, plus, the captain that will drive the chopper is retired for the day"

I think for a minute "hmmm, do you know how to fly a chopper?"

He scoff and push his glasses at the bridge of his nose before the elevator dings.

Germany formed a smug look.

"Of course, I don't" he said confidently.

I snickered and followed him inside.

"But must we go today goddess? Why not tomorrow?"

I shake my head "I just have a gut feeling that I really should go and see it as soon as possible"

Germany turns to look at me questioningly but nodded "whatever you say goddess, I'm here to support you"

Support me...

I've always wanted someone to say that to me. I don't want anyone to worry about what I'll do because I won't do something I know I can't do...

I just needed someone like Germany who'll support me...

But at the same time, it's understandable why they'd worry...

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I stand before the door where France is and Germany was hiding not far from where I was; watching.

From the side of my eyes I can see his glasses glint.

Taking a deep breath, I softly knock on the door.

"Yes?" Someone answered with a familiar soft and mellow accent.

"Who's there?..." France opened the door halfway with only half his body out.

He was wearing a bathrobe and pajama yet his bathrobe was loosely hanging and the belt wasn't even tied properly– I can see his fit body and slender curve.

His eyes were somehow half lidded as if he just woke up while

doing something.

I peeked behind him and saw his laptop and a bunch of notebooks on the dining table.

"S-sorry France, did I disturb you?"

He clicked his tongue and spoke in French (which of course, I didn't understand)

Ahh, he looked irritated.

I guess I'll really have to just go tomorrow, it'll be much easier.

"So-sorry, I'll come back tomorrow instead"

"W-wait!"

He grabbed my right wrist, eyes now wide open like he finally woke up "p-philipia?"

I nodded.

"Sorry! I was just– I just fell asleep while working on something, I didn't mean to– uhm– Well, anyways– why are you here?"

His expression softened and smiled, his dark bags much more visible under his eyes.

"Oh it's uhh–" I glance to where Germany was peeking at "– I was wondering if I could use your chopper today?"

He blinks a few times "of course you can, oh! But the captain is probably asleep... Do you need to use it now?"

"Yes"

"... Like, right, right, right now? This time? This late?"

"...yes?"

He leans back, fully opening the door and leaning on the frame "hmm, well I guess you have your reasons"

I fiddled with my thumbs "I suppose so, I just really... needed it" I mumbled the last part.

I hear France chuckle and pats me on the head "no problem, it's like sneaking out at night; it'll be exciting" he winked.

I look up at him and smiled "thank you, France"

"But I'm coming alright? Just give me a sec"

He closed the door and I swing my head to Germany, giving him a thumbs up.

He gives me back in return and claps (for some reason) with a straight face.

"Okay, I'm done"

I almost jumped from my position when he came out of the door with a bag and now fully dressed.

I told France that Germany was coming with us and he looked irritated for a secknd, but I guess that's normal.

I really might've disturbed him.

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When we arrived at the first floor, we had to make sure no one was around so we had to be careful; almost like we were escaping.

But as we got to the door, someone was already waiting just near the entrance.

Egypt, Nepal, Ireland, Greece and Poland were there, fully dressed for the night.

"I knew you were up to something when the tracker started beeping like crazy" Egypt scowls and showed me a small phone with a red dot.

I unconsciously held the necklace he gave me– I forgot that it even had a GPS tracker on it.

"Eww, why?" Poland churned at Egypt before his expression soften when he looked at me "anyways! Heyu~ I'm here to tag along"

"I was just dragged here..." Greece commented...

"..." Of course Nepal simply nodded and smiled.

"I'm coming cause it sounds fun~" Ireland excitedly says.

"You can't stop us now" Egypt glares, standing there by the door with hands crossed to his chest and legs apart: blocking our way.

"Sure, tag along" France simply replied and stride passed them.

"I will not tolerate thi-- wait what?" He swiftly turn his head to France who's already by the door; looking around, left and right.

"I said, sure" he repeats and they turn their heads to Germany who shrugged, showing no reaction whatsoever before they turn to me next.

I chuckled "okay, you can come"

"Of course you can't say no to us" Egypt smugs.

I hope I won't repeat what happened with Malaysia.

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When we got out of the building, we went to hide behind trees and bushes.

"You can't be serious sneaking out through the gate" Greece whispered behind us who's holding two branches of a part of a bush above his head.

Egypt clicks his tongue and shakes his head "were going out of the academy" he explained.

"But- France's chopper is at the departure area, why are you guys talking like we're leaving the school– wait, you said we're leaving the academy?" Germany said.

Once again, Egypt shakes his head and clicks his tongue; the same thing he did to Greece "I, the great pharaoh already contacted someone from my country and they are now waiting at the city public departure area"

"Ohhh! Nice save edgey boy" Ireland giggles.

"Guys, sshh!!" Poland silence them sharply "someone's coming"

We immediately went back to hiding when a pair of footsteps came.

"Pusang gala– letche"

I flinched when I heard Tito's tired voice. Peeking through the small gaps of the bush that I'm hiding in, he stood not far from our spot with his back facing us.

"Why do I have to be on patrol today?" He grumpily asked himself and yawning afterwards.

Ireland also yawned (due to how infectious that is) and let out a voice unconsciously.

I saw Tito perk and turn to his heel, looking at the direction where we were hiding.

Oh no, Tito has amazing skills when it comes to finding people hiding.

I forgot he's a pro!

"Alright who was that? Come out now!" He shouts yet no one replied.

My heart was pounding every second he steps closer, but as he was about to push aside the bush where Ireland was hiding.

All of a sudden– athena flew straight at his face and flaps her wings.

"Ack! What the--! Hey!"

I turn to look at Greece who placed his finger on his lips with a smirk.

Tito stumbles back after that, Athena howls and rest on a tree that's on the opposite direction.

Tito clearly wasn't amused but his attention was diverted from us now.

We took this chance to quietly sneak away towards the wall where it separate the outside of the academy

"Damn you bird, if only I could cook you... You would make a good adobo!"

Greece jolted from that sudden remark, Poland tries to gesture him to hurry along before we get caught.

"Did you just hear what he said to Athena!?" He shout-whisper.

Poland placed a finger on his lips "shhhh! Let's just go already"

I can tell Greece wasn't happy about it, but I'll just pray for whatever comes next for Tito after this.

I mean, Athena is an owl cooking her and making her into an adobo would be brutal even for me.

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Paleozoic city [public departure and landing area]

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"Whoohooooo!!!!!!! That was so fun!" Ireland exhales and stretch his back.

"We almost got caught!" Poland added with excitement in his eyes.

Ireland nodded and agrees "I almost wet my pants!"

"Ew, stop that" Germany looks at him disturbingly.

"what? But I didn't, didn't I?"

"Can we just hurry along.... Please?" Egypt says behind me.

France laughed and wrap an arm around him "lighten up, it's like we're on a secret mission"

Egypt groans and rolled his eyes "I just wanna get to the treasure"

"How can you be sure it's even a treasure?"

Egypt turns to me "anuket, is it a treasure?"

Now everyone turns to me.

I don't know how to answer them, and if I did, they'll react the same thing as Malaysia and Israel...

Will they stop me? Or maybe try to go back?

I look down and simply replied with a quick shrug. It somehow scares me to answer, it leaves a bitter feeling in me. I'll definitely make this the last request and after this, if I get to go somewhere; I'll go alone.

It's best to go alone...

I don't mind if it's selfish anymore, as long as nobody finds out.

"Ah well, looks like philipia won't tell us, I guess it'll just be a surprise" Ireland smiles, giving me a hint of reassurance.

I nodded in response.

"Alright that's enough, let's go now" Greece pushed us all towards the helicopter that's already waiting for us with a captain too.

Obviously he looked like Egypt's men.

He bowed at us before getting on.

I stop for a second and look back; I can still see the academy building from here.

"You coming?"

I turn to Poland who's reaching out for me with a smile.

I nodded and I held his hand before hopping inside and strapping myself on one of the seats.

"Why does this helicopter looks exactly the same as mine?" France wondered.

Egypt scoffs "cause it is yours"

France furrowed his eyebrows "wait, it's mine? I thought you said it was yours"

"Ah, ah, ah~ I didn't say that, I simply said I contacted someone from my country but we're using your helicopter"

"Tsk, you cheapskate"

"My helicopter is made out of pure gold, it would blind you peasants"

They started to bicker with Poland and Ireland between them while me and Germany are between Greece and Nepal.

They didn't even realize the captain had started the engine and talked to us through the headset we're wearing.

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2 : 30 am [Philippines, Laguna: Maria makiling]

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"Are you sure your brother won't find out?" Ireland whispered behind me whilst everyone gets down from the helicopter.

I nodded " I already called our Capital City about it"

He sighs "alright, if you say so"

"Hey, it says here that it's a haunted or yet cursed island?" Greece showed me his phone where he searched about the place.

I nodded "well, some people does think it is, but as long as you don't disturb or anger the spirit in this island you're okay" I explained.

Egypt flinched when I said 'spirit' while Greece looked at me suspiciously.

"There's a fairy here?" Poland asked with a sparkle in his eyes.

"That's what everyone says"

I glance at France who's warming himself from the cold. I checked the time on my watch and noticed that it's only 2 am.

Even if my country is a tropical place, it's still cold at dawn especially with a lot of trees.

"What about the city in charge of this place? Where is he?" Germany asked as he looks around.

"Oh, I already told him that I'll be touring you guys instead"

"Oh, that explains it" Greece sighs and turn to the island before us "so? Where do we begin?"

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We entered the island and almost walked for an hour, it felt like we were going in circles. We kept coming back to the same place

multiple times and sometimes we would be in a daze for a second and walk back again.

"Maybe the island really is cursed" Nepal spoke for the first time today.

Greece wheezed, catching for his breath with his clothes all shriveled up "shut up! As if there's such a thing as a c-cursed island! I don't believe in curses!"

"Don't say such a thing! You'll anger the spirits!" Egypt whispered the last part while clinging on to me (since the moment we entered).

Germany forms a smirk and placed his hand in his waist "oh yeah? Then why do you look so scared Greece?"

"Shut it nerd!"

"Huh?! You want a fight!? I'll give you a fight! How dare you call me a nerd! I'd rather be called a cult freak than a nerd! Nerd!" He remarks at Greece.

I've never seen Germany lost his composure to anyone aside towards Israel.

And as a leader of this country, I really can't say for sure if it's real. Though, what am I suppose to be looking?

Why can't I feel it like I did with the boxes?

I walked not a little far from them and think for a moment. Back when I was looking for the boxes with the papers and keys in it. I can feel like there was those certain feelings and kept pulling me to it.

But this time I don't, yet we kept coming back here.

It's far from where we came from yet it's not near either, just at the central part of the island.

Okay, I think we are far away from where the helicopter was

waiting.

I glance back to them and they were already arguing.

"How about you watch your tongue on what you say?!" Germany was being held back by Egypt and Nepal.

Whilst Greece was held back by Ireland and France and Poland was between them, trying to stop the meaningless argument.

"Why don't you watch your tongue instead?! You creepy! Useless cult freak!"

And in that moment, Germany snapped pushing Egypt and Nepal; charging towards Greece who didn't even fight back.

"Say that again!" He exclaimed and grabbed Greece by the collar, France and Ireland were thrown on both sides.

"I'll say it again! Useless and creepy cult lead--AHHHHH!!!!"

"AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!"

In a spur of the moment, the ground where Germany and Greece were standing on collapsed and they both fell.

"Germany!?! Greece!?" I exclaimed, running towards the hole they just fell into.

"Are they dead? Oh my gods! They're dead!!" Egypt gasped and started hyperventilating "I didn't even ask them what type or mummification they'd like!"

"Egypt! Chill! Calm down!" Ireland's accent came out for a second, he too is panicking.

"Germany?!" I called; we waited for a good few seconds yet there was still no answer.

"Yep! They're dead" France stated with a rather calm expression.

Suddenly, Poland's phone started ringing "gah! That scared me!" He

jumped and clumsily answered the call "hello?"

"Guys! Jump down!"

It was Greece on the other side of the phone.

"You're alive?!"

It was more of a disbelief rather than relief.

"Of course we are! Just– hurry down already! It's dark!"

"Oh no!" Egypt gasped once more.

"What?" France replied.

"They're speaking on the other side! Through the dark other si--"

Before he could finish, France pushed Egypt in the hole.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHhhhhhhhhh....!!!"

His screams on the top of his lungs before that scream soon faded as he fall. After that, complete silence and nothing more.

Poland looks back at France with pure shock "y-you pushed Egypt!"

France raised a brow "yeah? Well I'm following after him" he said and hops down "see yaaaaaAHHHHHHHHHHHHHhhhhh.....!!!"

Just like Egypt, his voice fades and got further and further away and then– silence.

Me, Ireland, Poland and Nepal stayed there, looking at each other.

"Hey!"

Greece spoke again, on the other side of the phone.

"Ah! W-what?!"

"Why aren't you guy--"

The call was suddenly interrupted like Greece dropped his phone and it scattered on the ground.

There was a muffled voices and groaning before the call cuts off.

Beep.

Beep.

Beep...

"They're dead, let's go"

I held Nepal's hand, stopping him from going back.

"I guess it's safe...?" I wondered and they all looked unsure.

"I wanna die where I'm holding my book, not... Falling" he gestures the hole, still with a bank expression.

Poland scoffs "says the person who tried to kill himself" he remarked which Nepal flinched in response before looking away.

I released his hand and sigh "don't exaggerate, I can tell their safe" I said and stood up, dusting my pants.

Taking a deep breath, I took a step in and jumped.

"Ah! Wait! There's....a.....la.....de...r...!"

Before I could even realize what Poland said, I was already falling. Down into the dark hole under the earth.

"Ah! Wah!"

Before long, I landed on to something soft like fabrics and a large amount of dust scattered around. I coughed and sway my hands away from it.

"Anuket?!"

I hear Egypt call though his voice was far, followed by the sound of something metallic banging.

The place was dark, even the hole that I just fell from shows no sunlight– I don't even think the sun can reach here.

Slowly standing up, I blindly followed the sound "Egypt?" I called.

"Anuket! Oh no, did you die too?!"

"No, I didn't, I'm fine"

"We're dead!!!"

"Shut up will you?!" France yelled "philipia, we'll go look for the switch, I can barely see anything"

I can tell France was dragging Egypt away.

"Ack! Handle the pharaoh with care! Mongrel!"

As I blindly walk in the dark and my eyes adjusting from it, I jumped back when I touched something cold and hard.

"You touched it too?"

I jumped back again when Greece appeared behind me, holding up his phone with a flashlight.

"ah!" I let out a voice.

"Relax, it's just m--"

BOOF!

Suddenly someone else fell in and the dust scattered around once more.

"Oof! Whoah! That was fu--"

"Ack!! My ribs! Gobshite! Get off!"

"You get off you drunk Irish-- aggh!!! W-what now?! Who fell?!"

"Bollocks, I'm sandwiched between you two! Get off!"

"That's Nepal isn't it?!"

It was Poland, Ireland and Nepal who fell after.

"Whoah, it's dark" Ireland spoke.

Greece sighs and shines the light to them.

Ireland squinted his eyes.

Poland was laying on what looked like clothes (the fabric and place I fell onto) that is stacked into a pile of mountain, whilst Nepal and Ireland were already standing up.

"Are you guys okay?" I asked and helped Poland up.

He giggled and held my hand "thanks philis~"

Poland hops down the mountain of clothes while Nepal and Ireland jumped down– scattering the dust again.

Greece coughed and smacks Ireland's arm "the dust Ireland! The dust!"

Ireland shrinks "oops, sorry bout that"

I walked towards the clothes and inspect it closer "hm?..."

"What is up with this place?" Poland while dusting himself.

"I would like to answer that question too" Greece replied.

"Where's Egypt and the others?" Ireland added.

"They went off and looked for the light switch"

While they talk, I noticed that the pile of fabric or clothes that we landed on had a pattern on it.

"Are you okay?" Nepal asked who's crouched down besides me.

"These clothes..."

He takes out his phone too and turned his flashlight on, giving us a more light.

"Those are military uniforms" Ireland stated, getting a closer look "oh they're all different"

Suddenly, the dark place was engulfed in light.

"Finally! We can see... What the...fuck!?"

My eyes widen when the cold and hard thing I touched earlier was actually, a huge tank...

"What..." I mumbled out, my eyes not leaving the vehicle that didn't looked like it belonged here.

"Hey guys...? Look"

Poland points to a direction to which we followed. Climbing up to the pile of soldier uniforms, what we saw next was unbelievable.

A long, wide, spacious and neverending like room was actually filled with tanks all perfectly lined up together.

"Whew! I thought we'd never find the switch for the ligh-- merde! Are these...!!" France exclaimed.

Followed after him was Egypt, and Germany who all had the same reaction when they saw the tanks.

I got off and walked around the room.

There were three rows of them yet I couldn't determine how many columns there are.

"What are these things doing here?" Egypt wondered though no one could answer.

I couldn't answer.

Papa, what are these?

"Goddess..." Germany called while he stood to a particular tank on

the fourth column second row.

He was facing on a spot and I followed it.

My eyes grew wide again...

It was his flag, and besides it was the flag of professor Reich.

"These are mines and my father's..." He stated.

I walked around more, keeping an eye to where a flag can be placed and painted.

"Philis!" Poland called.

I look up at him where he stood on top of a tank "there are tanks from Russia, Joe, and even France..."

"Mine?" France followed to where Poland was.

The tanks all lined up were different types, all with different patterns and designs...

"UK has one as well..." Egypt spoke "North Korea, and China..."

My heart was thumping, I can hear it in my ears loud and clear, thinking of the worse things possible.

Why? How? When?

Papa...

"Philipia, tell us why different tanks from different countries are down here?" Greece asked, his eyes was serious and asking for answers.

I shake my head and step back "I don't know..."

He narrowed his eyes at me "if you don't know then how were you able to find this place?"

"I don't know..." I replied again.

If they're surprised, so am I.

Nepal held my hand but I slip it off, I bite my lower lip and walk around once more.

I need air, I can't breath I really need to think straight...

When I noticed another door at the far back of the room "Philipia" France called behind me.

"I don't know, even if you ask me again and again I don't know" I said to him in advance.

France soften his eyes and pats me on the head "I know..."

I look away and grip on to my hand.

"But I just want to tell you that, I noticed these tanks are supposedly destroyed and broken"

I look at him, confused on what he meant.

"What I mean is... I recognize some of these and I fought with it too..."

Oh right, his memories isn't...

"And I'm pretty sure, that tank of mine, was destroyed" he stated, pointing at the one he saw.

"You mean to tell me that..."

"Yeah, but I also noticed that it was sort of enhanced? Like it was improved in a way"

I gritted my teeth and glance over to where everyone was.

They all turn towards our direction, all with the same curious and confused expression.

"I'll look around more... I might find answers" I said and he nodded.

Walking back to the door I saw, I slowly pushed the rusty metal

door open.

"No..." Was the first words that came out.

Guns.

Guns were filled and scattered all over the floor from their open crates.

Not just that.

The room was the same as the first one.

Wide, long, and spacious.

Like 2 times the size of a football field.

The ceilings were much higher yet, wooden shipping containers reached it.

What are inside those...?

Everyone soon came in and started looking around.

Some crates were filled with bullets, some were filled with different varieties of guns, pistols, knives, and machine guns.

There were also canons, all stacked up and hidden at the very back corner of the containers.

Poland approached one and opened the lock, and inside those large containers were crates as well.

They fit inside like puzzles.

Egypt and Nepal pulled one out and opened it.

Bombs.

We pulled another one out.

Snipers.

Another one out.

Bullets.

Another...

Gun powders.

Everything that you would use for military were here.

I turn to Egypt who turn to me as well with a worried expression "I think your father was hiding more than just a secret, anuket" he said.

Germany walks over to me holding a bazooka with a faded flag painted on it– which was his.

"Goddess... What are these?"

Poland then comes over "I can tell that there is definitely something going on, especially here..." He points his head "I'm missing a memory, aren't I?"

"Am I the same?" Germany looks at me with pleading eyes.

France steps in front of me "blame Pangaea for your missing memories, not her..." He said.

"So we were right, me and Sweden had been suspicious about it..."

"It's okay to be aware, but it's best not to retrieve it" Ireland stated while sitting on one of the crates, holding a shotgun "the pain would be unbearable, right? Philipia?" He smiled at me.

I slowly nodded and look away.

"Perhaps, Ireland is also...?" Poland's voice trails off.

"Yeah, I know I have missing memories but I don't want to take it back; there has to be a reason why" he said "I probably suffered a bad trauma or something and I'm sure I volunteered for it"

"Then, what about me?" Germany spoke, gripping onto the weapon

"did I volunteer?"

No one could answer him immediately. Germany stood there, waiting for a response from anyone.

I wanted to tell him that he's one of the leaders on the list... Like Joe.

It was stronger, blocking even a speck of it.

But I don't have the guts to tell him.

"No"

We all turn to France; he shakes his head and continued "from what I can remember, you made lots of damages, and that you were one of the top list..."

"So I was a really... Bad person?"

This time, nobody replied though I feel like Germany already knew the answer deep down.

Germany couldn't say anything anymore other than nod and put the weapon back.

I want to comfort him but Nepal stop me "let him process it, otherwise it'll trigger it and it's a bad news"

I look at Nepal then to Germany who continues to look around.

Poland looks at me apologetically; he turn to his heel and walked over to him.

While they talk, something blinding caught my attention from a small gap. I look over to it and there was a small hole on a particular wall.

"Philipia" Greece called, I stop and turn to him "what I said earlier, I didn't mean to blame you or amything– it's just how I am..."

I smiled and nodded "I know... I was shock like you were, my mind

couldn't process it immediately- which is a first"

He softy looks at me "okay..."

I turn back to the wall again and squinted my eyes on it.

"What's wrong?" He asked.

Walking towards it, I pressed my hand gently "there's something here?" I said, peeking through the small hole, though I couldn't really see much due to something blinding blocking my vision.

"Here?" He pressed his hand as well before it slightly moved.

"Whoah!" We both jumped back, thinking that the wall almost fell on us.

"Anuket? Mongrel Greece? What are you two doing?" Egypt called and walked towards us.

"Should we push it?" I asked and Greece shakes his head.

"If it breaks, the ceiling would crash– probably"

"Nonsense! HeeeeeeeeYAHHHH!!!!!!"

Out of nowhere, Ireland sprinted towards it and pushed it with the side of his body.

We were quiet as we watch the wall sway back and forth before it stayed still after.

"A stubborn wall– one more!"

"Wait! Are you crazy?! This place is old! If we break it! The ceiling will collap--"

"Oomp..."

We turn to Nepal who softly kicked it.

"Stronger Nepal!" Ireland cheers and Greece tried to intervene.

"Okay"

"Hey! No!"

BAM!

There was a soft rumble and a cream, before that wall slowly ye loudly crash on the ground.

The dust almost filled the entire room but now I'm sure, there really is something behind it.

As the dust settles, we sway some of the particles away and step inside.

"Ack! Dust! Dang it!" Greece coughed and so did everyone.

But as we entered, the blinding light that I saw, was none other than--

"Golds!!!!"

Egypt exclaimed and ran towards it.

The room wasn't as spacious as the two rooms we went to. But this room was the same size of four joined classroom with higher ceilings...

And in the middle of it were three mountains of golds that reached the ceiling, it even hit the light that almost made the room turn into gold.

The same gold light that was peeking through the hole.

"Oh my gods! Not only golds! diamonds, crystals, rubies... Topaz... Sapphires!" He gasped comically "is that a t-t-tanzanite?!!?" He grabbed the violet-blue gem stone that was piled on a particular spot.

There were also gold bars stacked perfectly into a pyramid, small golden dust was also all over the floor– almost covering it as well.

"Papa what are these..." My lips trembled.

I don't feel the slightest bit of happy about it. I feel uneasy, my stomach churning and twisting– knotting itself in.

"Is this...!!" Egypt gasped again while covering his mouth as he takes out a diamond that's bigger than his hand "this is! Th-this is!!!!?!?"

Poland followed after him and examined the diamond he showed.

"Okay, I'm both in awe... And I'm both panicking? Shock? Surprised? All synonyms of the word what the fuck" Greece stutters while breathing heavily as he faced me.

His eyes kept darting back and forth to me and the mountains of golds.

Germany and Ireland were also surprised but they simply stood at the back while watching Egypt– who's happily looking through the stones.

France placed a hand on my shoulder "philipia" he called before he pulls me away "tell me honestly, what was your father like?"

His eyes were filled with confusion, shock, and curiousity like everyone else.

"I don't know anymore..."

He bite his lower lip and swallowed hard "the different soldier uniforms, those tanks, those weapons... This isn't funny anymore, this is something serious"

I nodded and I, 100% agree with him.

"Look..."

Nepal points to the sacks at the corner, he opened one of them before a large bead of pearl fell.

It rolled towards me and stop at my feet. I picked it up and noticed

it was the same size of my palm.

"A pearl..."

I walked towards it and the sacks were all filled with the same size of this pearl.

All in perfect circles...

Shining brightly and reflecting, like they were varnished multiple times to imitate a mirror.

Nepal turns to me with a knowing look "there are 8 sacks of it..." He said.

I look over to the other unopened ones that's all bulging, obviously it's definitely pearls inside as well.

I pushed it down and the opened one scattered all over the floor like beads.

"Where did your father find these...?" Ireland asked me and I shook my head.

"Hey..." Nepal called and we all turn to him.

He was crouched down on the sack that I pushed were it spilled all the pearls "remember what Japan told us? When we were at vaalbara?"

"You mean the part you guys sneaked out to do the test of courage?" France raised a brow.

Nepal nodded.

"What about it?"

He picks up one pearl and raises it above his head, it glints and it shone.

"Japan once told us about the pond were there were once full of pearls... Right?"

I jolted and the hair on my skin stood.

"You mean, these pearls are from... Vaalbara? Now how would your dad even find it? Before, vaalbara was a sacred place for continent leaders, until they made it into a camp site– in fact nobody even knew it existed except the continent leaders" France explained.

Germany walks behind us "because before, it was considered sacred and a secret due to its island full of stones like golds and these...." He gestures the pearls "this pearl or should I say the pond of pears were like the land mark of Vaalbara island"

"Ur island's land mark are black opals and even now, it's flooding that island– that's why no one is allowed in it"

"And it just says here..." Nepal points to the sack were something was written on it.

'vaalbara'

I step back when I felt like throwing up.

"There's also Ur! Wait--" Greece went to the other sack where it was labeled Ur before ripping it open.

Clink!... Clink....

Black opals scattered on the floor.

I thought that it also had pearls due to the same texture with the rest that's bulging with something round.

I didn't think it would be these...

"Well, that answers it" Germany pushed his glasses.

"Your father stole these?" Greece turns to me.

I shake my head "n-no... No! Papa would never!"

Nepal held Greece's shoulder "don't get angry at her, nobody even knows these existed"

"Yeah but still...!"

"What's the point anyways? Okay, her dad was part of something dangerous" Egypt comments and we all turn to him while he tries out different gold jewelries on the pile.

"we all did bad things all leaders did for survival, didn't we?" He narrowed his eyes at us at the corner of it.

"Many countries colonized and stole from others, so this is no difference, and you're not even off the hook Greece" Ireland added.

He flinched "what about me?"

"Don't act clean!"

Greece clicked his tongue and crossed his arms.

I really don't know what's happening anymore. I did asked for answers where papa was trying to take me but– I didn't expect it to be these.

Guns, military vehicles, stolen gemstones...

I thought I'd find something about papa...

And you did...

Yes, and I did.

They started to argue and bicker once again but I couldn't understand a single thing anymore.

My ears were ringing and the sounds around me became muffled.

Unconsciously, I cover my ears and dropped the pearl I was holding.

Clink!.... Clang!

It erupted and echoed, startling us as we listen to that pearl falling and falling somewhere even deeper.

"What was that?"

I look to my right where there was a hole at the bottom of the wall where the pearl rolled into.

Ireland approached the wall - or what we thought was a wall - and pushed it open.

"You didn't even consider that it'll collapse the ceiling!" Greece stomps his feet.

Ireland coughs and sways the dust around him "but it didn't, didnt it?"

Greece groaned and rolled his eyes.

"A secret room... Oh wait, there's stairs leading down" Poland wondered as he looks inside.

There was a spiral stair that only leads down with no light.

"That's... Creepy" Egypt shudders and steps back "I'm not going dow-- oof! Hey!"

Suddenly, Ireland carried Egypt over his shoulder like he was a sack before proceeding to go down.

"It looks fun! Let's go!" He cheerfully said and trots off.

"Let me go! Handle the pharaoh with care mongrel! Ack! It's darkkkkk!!!!"

Greece, Nepal, and France followed after, using their phones as flashlights.

I stop and simply watched them go down.

If I go down and discover something, it might be worse or something more than these tanks, guns and golds...

"philis?" Poland calls.

I snapped back and faced poland and Germany; waiting for me by

the entrance.

"I can't..."

Germany walks to me and held my hand "why not?"

"What if... What if it's worse? What if I can't handle it?"

Germany shakes his head "then we'll take care of it"

Poland walks to us as well "it'll be okay philis, just trust your dad..."

Trust papa.

Ah, that's right. I'm so ashamed that I even judge him harshly without even knowing the reason why

I didn't even care to look at the good deeds his done.

As a leader and as a father.

"Okay..." I nodded and gave in.

Holding onto Germany's warm hands, I followed them both and descended down in the darkness.

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Ireland found the switch and turned the lights on.

"This is wicked" he muttered and dropped Egypt.

"Ow! Tsk! Stupid mongrels" Poland hurriedly went to Egypt's aid and helped him up.

And as I got down on the last step, Germany released my hand and gave way for me.

It was a room with a round table at the middle and in that table, there were chess pieces– though instead of a checkerboard, it was a map.

At the left part of the room, there was a rectangular table and a bunch of tools and broken parts of guns on it; it must've been the worktable.

And the right side there were pictures, maps with markers- written in old Tagalog letters and the pictures hanging were places that is definitely not the Philippines.

Although three pictures caught my eye.

"Isn't this Lazaretto??" Egypt took one "and this is the north brothers island... And this is illorsuit– it still has people in it, look!"

How was papa able to go around? I can't even remember much, and from what I can remember, he was always there when I needed him.

I look for more and found a hidden picture at the back of the others. It was a woman, sitting on a rock with a veil, it shows her nose and lips (curved in a smile)

But I can't make out her entire face. The picture is so old it's almost erasing it.

"This is..."

France took it from my hand and examined it with a rather serious look "this woman..." He muttered.

"Do you know her?" I asked, waiting for his answer but France turn to me; his serious expression soften and replied with a shake of his head.

"No, I don't..."

I can tell he's not saying the truth by I won't pry it anymore.

I look back to the picture again and noticed something and it stands out with all of her dark clothes.

A necklace– and for some reason it feels like I've seen it.

Have I?...

Taking the picture and putting it inside my bag, I proceed to look around more.

At the north part of the room.

There was a single table, books stacked on it, old crumpled papers and a spilled ink rest.

"This seems to be the meeting room" Egypt said as he hands me a bunch of papers.

"These are..." I examined the old papers. The texture was the same as those papers I found in those boxes.

Egypt nods at me "they're the same, and I can guess it all started here, from that letter to your father's boxes and the locations... I guess those letter were also written here"

He gave me another paper that's crumpled badly and what looked like a sample paper with scribbled words and numbers.

"I see"

Fumbling with it's texture, it feels like it's the first in a long time I held it; although I was holding the saw thing, only worn out and older.

Now that I recall, why was there a bucket hole in one of those papers?

Biting the inside of my cheeks, I placed it inside my bag.

"This is where they would do their meeting, create a plan and execute it" Ireland takes a pawn "and it looks like every plan was a success... Well, most of it" he added and slides me a paper with old Tagalog on it and a check on the side.

Japan ✓

Germany ✓

France ✓

Vaalbara ✓

Russia ✓

America ✓

Texas ✓

Malaysia ✓

Singapore ✓

China ✓

Ur ×

Pangaea ✓

"This is? Is this the places where they took those stones?" I asked.

Ireland shrugs "seems like it, I guess"

"They even took from Pangaea too..." Germany muttered as he took the paper, completely ignoring his own name there.

"He has the balls" France commented and Germany nods in agreement.

"My sentiments exactly"

I look down at the table again where markers and texts written over it, arrows and signs.

It was all over the map that's laid out.

But what caught my attention was at the very corner, there was a writing that made my skin crawl.

'*you found it*'

I gulped down and look away; I can't even think straight anymore,

my mind is all jumbled up.

I don't even feel like getting surprised anymore.

"Philis, over here" poland called and he showed me the table where the spilled ink was.

I didn't noticed the box on it with a wilted flower on top of.

"Sampaguita..." I picked it up.

"Isn't that like the same box?" Egypt wondered and examined it standing right besides me.

I nodded before taking out my bag and rummaging through it "but I'm not sure if these keys will fit"

He blinks a few times before he checks the keyhole "hmmm, it has different molding but let's give it a try"

I take out 3 keys and hand them to Egypt.

"Hmmm..." He inserted the first one, it didn't work.

The second.

Even the third.

"Do we have to find the key?" Ireland spoke who's leaning on the round table.

"Well, I guess it would be easy since this room is small" Greece replied and started looking around.

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It's been about five minutes yet we couldn't find anything.

"Maybe the key isn't here" Ireland said and glance at the box "should we just destroy it? It's old anyways"

Egypt scoffs as if Ireland just said the most dumbest thing "You are the most dumbest person to think such a thing" he said.

Ireland raised a brow "Why not?" He remarked.

"Guys, let's not fight" Poland ushered, stepping in between the leaders.

Egypt fixes his shirt "you see this?" He points a particular part of the box where there was something sticking out.

"What's that? Splinter?" Germany asked, looking closely and adjusting his glasses.

"No! It's not! It's a trap" he said.

I tilt my head to the side "a trap?"

He nodded "let me explain– this is a trap, earlier when I was examining it I noticed this thing sticking out and of course I inspected it and realize it had combustible powder" he wipes his finger on it lightly and showed us his finger now covered in a dark powder "for short, gun powder"

"Uhhh, why does it have that?" France asked.

"Maybe it was just there because it was exposed outside, earlier we saw a lot of crates full of gun powders" Poland theorized.

Egypt shakes his head and click his tongue "no it is not, as you can see, the box is... Glued to the table" he tries moving it and it didn't budge.

I wanted to confirm so I tried it and it didn't "I did not realize that..." I said.

Egypt shrugs "it's fine anuket, but of course these mongrels wouldn't get it" Egypt smugs.

"I wanna punch him..." I hear germany whisper behind me.

"Anyways– if you ever break this, it'll explode, burning what it has

kept inside, I've seen things like these back in the day"

"But, would it also burn it if we open it?" Poland asked.

"No, that's why we have to find the key in order to decline the trap"

"Ohhh I see..."

I sigh and look down at the keys I have in hand again, flossing it between my fingers and noticed there was a form around it.

It's like holding a piece of a puzzle that fits perfectly for the other.

I placed the first key on the second and it click, it sticks.

I was surprised and was about to say something to them.

"Then why it's trap to a box?" Ireland asked.

Egypt massage his temple like a professor teaching children that kept asking questions.

"Because! It might be so important!"

"If it's important why put gun powder on it?" Poland raised his hand.

"For the love of all Egyptian gods! Will you mongrels start thinking and stop asking?!"

"Why not?" France asked while holding back a laugh.

Egypt groaned.

I sighed and remained quiet and continued to do the same to the other key.

I was baffled for a second when it actually formed a different key.

Now I'm really starting to ask myself if I really knew papa that well.

"I found it" I said and they all turn to me.

I showed them the key and they're eyes grew wide.

"Whoah! That's so awesome! Can I see??" Poland's eyes sparkled as I gave it to him.

"Impressive anuket, how did you know? How did you surpass my puzzle solving skills?" Egypt asked.

"I learned from the best"

Egypt was a little taken aback but chuckled "ha.ha.ha.ha....HA!HA! HA!HA!" He laughed out loud.

"Shut up you emo!" Greece exclaimed while covering both ears.

"I'm so sorry leaf crown, I can't hear you through my amazing skills, care to say that again?"

Greece clenched his fist and Nepal immediately held him back.

"Calm down"

"I'm gonna punch him real hard that I'll personally place his intestines in shit jars!"

I giggled at them before I time to Poland who's still in awe. He swiftly turn to me with a huge grin "Well, what are we waiting for?!" Poland eagerly steps in and inserted the key.

"One key, coming in!"

It was a perfect fit before he twist it to the right and it made a small click.

He proceed to open the box ever so carefully.

"Whoah" he whispered in awe.

We leaned close and peered what the content was and take it.

A letter.

A small paper with a 6 digit code: **9851-05**.

A folding pocket Kodak camera.

A triangle shape necklace with 3 K's on each sides.

And a torn picture.

"A group picture" Ireland takes it and examined it "there's smudges of blood and ink... Also, it looks like this torn part was burned"

I look down to the contents that was inside the box.

"Shouldn't you read the letter first?" Egypt gestures.

I'm a bit hesitant, but I want to know...

I nodded and take the letter that is addressed to no one.

But for some reason, as I touch it. My hands started shaking and my heart thumping loudly.

"I..." I muttered and turn to Germany, he quick to pick up and clears his throat before slowly taking the letter from my hand "I'll do it, for the goddess" he said and proceed to open the envelope.

The paper inside was folded a bit thick; meaning that it was a long message.

"Oh, it's in english– surprisingly" he mumbled.

Ireland leaned on the table again, Poland sits on the chair, Egypt, Greece and Nepal turn their attention to him and France stood behind me.

Taking a deep breath, he reads it out loud.

'To whomever is reading this letter, it would seem you have found it. The last hidden insurance of the Philippines'

'You may think that the things you witnessed are stolen, some are indeed stolen... But not all. I don't know who will continue this dangerous harvesting, but surely, more weapons will be added'

'who knows, something even greater than weapons will be added'

'and to you, who found it, I am still not sure if I should congratulate you.

'And the fact that you found this place by merely stumbling upon it is quite impossible, let alone you who is reading this letter'

'because the only person who would be able to open this box without damaging it's contents... Is my daughter, philipia'

If you're not her, then I congratulate you.

But if you are...

'philipia my daughter, anak. I know that you're confused, you're angry, you're sad, you're hurt. And I'm sorry for it'

But papa had to do what he had to do, for the people, for the country, for the pearl of the Orient sea. This may seem I broke your trust and betrayed you; but I did this for the greater good.

I did this for everyone's greater good

I'm writing this letter and I'm willing to let you know everything about it.

Starting from its name.

'samahan tatsulok is the name of this organization where we travel to places and take unwanted weapons from countries. We take what they throw, we recycle it, we enhance it, we fix it as our own.

Their trash is our treasure.

'many of our members perished, died, lost, taken as hostages throughout our travels. This place was created through blood, sweat and tears: literally.

Originally, we were 115 members but it drastically decreased to 10'

'it is sad but it's the truth'

'There are two founders of this club: Me and Lihim. She was the first to come up with this club, she is the one that navigates, the one that points

to specific places with wars. She knows her way around the world as if she can read it on the back of her hand'

'she is also the one who told us about the sacred island: vaalbara and Ur. The islands named after the deceased continent leaders'

'we took everything we needed, for insurance, for safety, for sure so that if ever our country falls to ruin. We have a trump card'

And yes, it's a crime to steal. But the world had stolen suite enough from us already, it's only fair I steal from the world as well.

'and whilst the world is fighting against each other, my people were already building a future in the background, unknown to the world, unknown to hungry eyes'

'but I know, I will hurt you with my actions, philipia. That's why I'm writing this letter explaining to you what it is and where it all come from'

'if you wish to know more in detail, there is a secret hatch just beneath this table. In there, all the documents, records, the places, the crimes, the weapons and things we did: everything. Are all recorded there.

Why? What's the purpose? Because I did this, for your mother, for Perla, for my wife...'

'when she left us everything turned black, everything turned gray, everything makes no sense anymore'

'I'd rather wished she died of childbirth, or an illness, or simply died during her sleep– not like how that bastard did'

'I can never forgive them like you did my daughter. And do so Forgive me for I am not perfect but I still want to be a good parent and to be a good example'

'That is why I'm giving you a choice'

'if this place is discovered by the wrong people and used by the wrong hands, war from every country will break. Right now, if the world knows of this place, we would be considered the top, the strongest, the riches,

we would be unstoppable'

'though, knowing you, I'm sure you wouldn't want that. I'm sure my sweet and kind hearted daughter wouldn't want that'

'there's more to this place, more underneath. This is only the tip of the iceberg that you're seeing. Underneath this place, there's more golds, more guns, more weapons, more of everything if you know where to look, if you know where the in's and out's'

'we've dug so deep under the earth that I'm afraid we might reach the center'

'But if my daughter wish to destroy this place: then destroy it, it's your choice. Me and Lihim have given you permission to do so. I'm thankful that she's understanding to agree with my selfish request'

'all you have to do is find the detonator. Use the codes I provided for you and it'll give you an hour before it completely destroys this place underground'

It will activate all hidden bombs underground, and it would be enough to destroy anything.

'no one will know, they would only assume it was an earthquake. No noise, no smokes, nothing... It will completely erase itself away from everyone's eyes beneath the earth'

"Truly, a secret buried in the past'

'but if you wish to use it in whatever way you want, use it' but I'm sure, if it's you, you'll use it for the right reasons.

'Time is running out, anak. You must make your decision' the world waits for no one. Not even to us leaders.

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'Today is July 2, 1902. Soon, the end will come, soon my end will come'

I gripped on to the quill pen as hard as I can, my tears streaming down on the paper.

'I'm sorry I won't be able to watch you grow... I'm really sorry' but I will continue to watch over you my love's.

'mahal na Mahal Kita anak. Wag mong kakalimutan na maging masunurin, gawin ang Tama, maging masipag, malakas, maging masayahin, maging mabuti, maging makatao, maging tunay na pinuno'

'hindi matutumbas nang kahit ano man ang pagmamahal ko sainyo, ikaw, si martial at ni Greg. Wag kayong lalandas... Mga anak'

'kaluluwa ko ay laging nasainyo...'

I wiped the fat tears that kept falling. I have to finish this... I have to tell her everything– I have to...

The noises outside was getting louder and louder. My people can't hold them off for long...

'mahal Ka ni papa, philipia'

'hanggang sa muli. Paalam'

'nagmamahal sayo, Papa

Folding the paper and putting inside the envelope. I hurriedly placed it inside the box.

Putting the camera, my membership necklace, the code, and the letter.

Closing the box, I locked it with the key before taking it apart. Separating it into three.

I hope philipia would be able to gather these...

"She'll know find it, have faith in her." I turn to Lihim, standing by

the door already holding an itak with bloodstains on it.

"If you say she will, then she will. I trust you" I replied.

Taking the box, I gave it to her before I took the itak from her blood stained hands "make sure... No one will find you and follow you"

I can tell she smirked behind her veil "since when did that happen?"

I laughed before I gave her the keys "you know what to do next..."

She nodded and takes it.

As I leave the hut, I immediately smell the fresh powder of guns and smokes and fire; followed by the thick scent of blood.

"Kati!" Lihim called. I stop and glance to her by my right shoulder.

"Don't be foolish and hold on. Wait for me to return..."

"Weren't you the one who told me today is my last day?" I remarked with a smirk.

"I did! But..." She's definitely trembling and having a hard time to find the right words.

I simply smiled and nodded "ingat Ka..."

Lihim turns to her heel and sprinted away towards the island where our hideout is.

May the heavens bless you.

Turning back towards the battlefield, I cleaned the itak with my sleeve.

The sky is so gray today, a wonderful day... To die indeed...

"Perla... I'll be with you soon"

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I ran out of the room and saw a ladder leading back to the surface.

Hurriedly climbing up, I screamed on the top of my lungs before falling down to the grass.

"AHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!! Damn it! Damn it all! Damn you papa!" I sobbed and gripped on to the dirt "damn you..." I said through gritted teeth.

I cried and cried, the tears never stopping, never stopped falling... It seems my vision had been obscured by it.

I can't see anything anymore, it's all too blurry...

"Philis!"

"I don't know anymore, Poland..." I said and turn to him over my shoulder.

I probably look like a mess now.

"I don't know a damn thing anymore! I don't know what else to think about papa! What that club is! Hell– I don't even trust myself anymore! I don't trust my own memories!"

He hushes me down "I know, I know... Let's calm down first"

I sit up straight, my shoulders slumped before I let my head fall back, screaming out once more on the top of my lungs.

It feels like a tight painful knot untangled inside me. Like a dam breaking apart.

Poland sighs and rub circles on my back "philis..." He softly called before leaning my forehead to his lips "Shhhh... It's okay now, it's okay... Let's just go home..."

I shake my head and look away, hugging myself for comfort

instead.

"And just forget about it? My father stole treasures from different places... Took broken military vehicles and weapons, upgrading them into even something powerful! He's been preparing for a war! This isn't insurance! I didn't even realized he was so drowned in anger and hate...! I was naive" I sobbed.

"No! No you're not, you're philis, you just want the best of everything"

I look away, avoiding his touch "it doesn't change the fact that I was ignorant! Insensitive! And selfish! Malaysia and Israel were right... I really should stop being dumb!"

"Philis!" He said with a scolding tone "look at me!"

I didn't but he cups both my cheek and made me face him "you're not dumb! And the part of you being naive is normal in human nature! There's a reason why you're like that!"

Another batch of tears spilled again, drenching his hand "then what is it?!"

"I don't know! It could be that you didn't want to face a harsh reality"

Removing his hand from me I replied "then that really means I've been turning on a blind eye! I've been stuck in my fantasy for too long that I've forgotten what my reality is!"

"Philis! Please! Listen to yourself!"

"I've never really wanted this! I've never really wanted to be anything like this! I never wished...for this..." Slumping back down on the ground again, Poland gently pulls my head to his chest and I sobbed there uncontrollably.

His chest falling and rubbing the back of my head "okay, I understand... I understand you" he leans his lips to my side "let's go home already, we've been here for too long"

"We can't just leave, Poland"

Poland flinched and we both turn to France who manages to climbed back up from the hole.

"Hey" he greeted but I couldn't greet anything back.

The moment Germany finished reading Papa's letter, I immediately bolted out of the room, dropping my bag to release the coiled up feelings in me.

"Then what are we suppose to do? I don't think destroying this place is a good idea either"

"Why not? Her father already gave her permission, and he clearly said that if this place is found by someone on the wrong hands, world war 3 will begin"

"Didn't that already happen?"

France sighed "it didn't happen, because nobody wanted it– and if you still wanna argue about the number I'll just call it world war"

Poland shakes his head "then what do you propose we should do?"

France thinks for a minute "hmmm..."

I didn't even both to wait, I just kept holding onto Poland's shirt and waited for my tears to dry up.

France slams his hand on his other palm "I've got an idea..."

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"Pledge of a leader? I haven't done that in a while, at least, not in this day and age" Egypt comments.

Pledge of a leader is sometimes used to make sure the other party stays true to their words and not break it.

It's more of a pinky promise but leader edition.

I sat on a nearby rock while they discuss about it while Poland was besides me.

"That's risky though I don't oppose the idea" Greece added.

Now that I realized it. I didn't even noticed that it's already bright out.

"After that letter I just read, I don't mind either, it's also worth it if it's for the goddess" Germany said who hands me my bag I dropped earlier.

"You're not concerned about your missing memories anymore?" France asked.

Germany shakes his head "it's best that way, but I'm glad I know I'm missing something; that's way I won't bang my head from thinking about it"

"How about you?" France gesture to Ireland and Nepal.

They both shake their heads "we don't mind" Ireland says "in fact, it's the most durable way to keep this place a secret"

"Doesn't this mean that we're the next generation to continue this club?" Poland remarks.

"Sort of–" Nepal replied.

"Anyways, you all are in?"

They all nodded before turning to me.

"How about you philis?" Poland whispered besides me.

I hug my knees to my chest and shake my head "I don't mind..."

"Okay, we're all in" Poland clarifies.

"okay. Well then everyone, gather around"

I got off the rock and we all stood in circle.

France took a deep breath and so did the others "let's start..."

We all closed our eyes and let our markings appear, I can feel all my senses getting sharper and sharper every second.

I can hear the flapping wings of a bee, the chilly and warm breeze and the earth ever so surely rotating.

Once we opened our eyes; France was the first to place his hand on his chest and the one to say the opening statement.

"Leaders who are here today, a special pledge will be made aware. Let your marks and land appear, leave now or volunteer. This day, this time, and this place; will be kept hidden from the eyes of fate..."

One by one, we all said the same thing before holding our hands together.

"I, Egypt, agree"

"I, Ireland, agree"

"I, Nepal, agree"

"I, Germany, agree"

"I, Poland, agree"

"I, France, agree"

"I, Greece, agree"

"I... Philippines, agree"

Our marks glowed even brighter, and the markings on our hands starts to connect to each other.

"Swallow a thousand needles, give up an island and free them,

swear to the sky, to the sea, to the air, to the very ground beneath them"

We all kneeled down on one knee and placed our hands on our chest.

"We pledge and promise...." We all whispered in unison.

With that, a promise was made. And whomever breaks it will give up a part of their land and markings.

And as leaders, those are the things we hate the most.

"With this..." France spoke and turn to me "your secret is safe with us..."

Tears threatened to spill once more but I tried my best to hold it back as much as I could...

But to no avail I couldn't.

I couldn't keep it all in and it just spilled.

I bite more than I can chew.

"O-okay..." My voice was shaky and lacking in air but I couldn't stop... I couldn't stop it.

"There there..." Nepal comforts me, running circles on my back while Poland is hugging me.

I want to destroy it, the club papa made.

But at the same time I couldn't...

For some odd reason, I feel an attachment to it; not in a bad way of course. Its more like a connection.

Yet I couldn't point my finger on it exactly.

"Let's go home...."

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Pangaea [male academy] 7 : 30 am

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I couldn't bat a sleep. Though I'm sure the others were exhausted, and I'm sure they didn't come to school.

That's understandable.

Getting up from my bed, I walked to my study table where I placed my bag. Taking the photos I took and along with Papa's letter; I examined them once more.

This woman– I'm sure this is Lihim. When France looked at this photo of her sitting on a rock, for a second it looked like he knew her.

I just couldn't ask him about it and my mind was still jumbled up from all the things today and what my father had hidden.

I placed it down at the table and took the group photo (I assumed is the remaining members)

I'm sure there's someone at this left corner but it's torn, it's like someone had purposely done it to hide them.

Looking at it even closer, I noticed they all had an insignia.

Some of which was on their hats and some of them was wearing them around their neck. Like the one that was in the box.

"Tatsulok... *Triangle*" I mumbled out, my finger tracing its shape.

I sighed and put it all back in my bag before fatigue slowly washed over me.

I yawned and crawled back on my bed, covering myself with my blanket, placing a pillow between my legs and hugging another

one...

Today was a crazy day.

There's were so many questions answered yet those answers even gave me even more questions.

Who is the person at the group photo were they were torn out.

Who is Lihim?

And if papa died before tanks and other vehicles were even invented, who continued the club and placed all of those there?

There's so many it's driving me insane...

And as I kept thinking for more.

My eyes grew heavier before darkness consumed me.

And I dreamt of a dreamless night.

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< < < End of Chapter 14 : A secret buried in the past.

> > > Coming Chapter 15 : Whelve

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Fact : Philipia is going through depression unknowingly.

Fact 2 : Laurasia is still locked up.

Fact 3 : The club / secret hideout is 1,898 deep.

Fact 4 : Lihim and Kati was closer than you think.

Fact 5 : If you check and pin the three places philipia went, it creates a shape.

Fact 6 : Maria makiling coordinate was already on the first chapter.

Fact 7 : Germany never lets anyone touch his phone (except philipia)

Fact 8 : Malaysia cried himself to sleep.

Fact 9 : Antarctica and arctic council is coming.

Fact 10 : You can't trust someone if you don't trust yourself.

[Hey guys! I hope you enjoyed this chapter and hopefully my writing didn't suck]

[But anyways~ there will be more secrets to be solved and answered so stay tuned for the next one next week~ (hopefully)]

[And since I lost my phone again, I'd be more than happy to know if you had a good day today]

[Thanks for reading this chapter and see ya on the next one~]

[Much love ~]

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Chapter 15 : Whelve

[image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy ~]

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Fluttering my eyes open, I looked around me and saw a vast field of flowers, the sky was so blue and the breeze was warm.

Inhaling the air around me I hear a familiar voice. It was soothing, soft, gentle and nostalgic. I followed the source of the voice and arrived to small hill with a single acacia tree at the middle.

Walking towards it I saw a woman standing besides it. Her skirt flows with the wind, the three strip of fabric that's dangling from her headband with single sampaguita flows along.

I stop not far from her and her soft humming of a nostalgic melody stopped as well.

There was nothing but the howling of the breeze around us and the rustling of the leaves from the acacia tree.

I swallowed hard and utter a word that I missed.

"Mama?..."

Slowly, she turns towards me and that familiar face and warm smile greeted me "yes anak?"

I sobbed and didn't even hesitate to run towards her and give her a hug. The warmth, the feeling of safety, the love that I feel whenever I embrace mama was all there.

"Shhhh... Why is my little Perla crying?"

I couldn't reply, I was too caught up and I missed her so much.

She chuckled ever so softly and started rubbing my back and patting my head "have you discovered something?"

I nodded in response.

"Good, I hope whatever you discovered was something that wouldn't change your perspective of someone"

I clutched on to her clothes "it didn't mama... I'm just so sad and I feel like a fool"

"Why is it?"

I look up to mama and didn't realize that my tears were obscuring my vision.

"Because, I was naive and foolish to think that papa... Was never consumed in anger"

She smiled and slides her thumb under my eyes, wiping the tears away like she always does; it makes it feel like she's wiping the pain away as well.

"Of course he is and it isn't your fault my little Perla, your papa was simply trying to protect you"

"I don't know why I'm angry and sad and... Hurt"

"Why not?"

I blinked multiple times "why... Not?"

"Yes; why not? Anyone in your position would feel the same way, it is a very dangerous secret"

We sat down on the grass right beneath the shadow of the acacia tree.

"But what I can't understand is that why he would do it and give me a choice to destroy it"

Mama sighs and pats my head "Kati is very confusing, sometimes even

mama can't read what's in his mind- but what I do know is that your papa did it for the right reason..."

"So should I destroy it? I mean, I'm a pacifist, I hate war mama and if that place were to be discovered by anyone and brother..."

I gulped and look down to my lap where my hands are all curled up "if he were to discover it, he won't hesitate to use it against the people I care"

Mama chuckled and stares at the sun that's setting. I didn't even realize we've been here half the day, it felt like it was only minutes ago when it was morning.

"Little Perla, you can only obtain peace at the right time at the right moment, you can't have pacifist without going through genocide- that is why it exists"

She takes the flower from her headband and placed it on me "your words will go through your kuya, trust me. But it's just not the right time, be patient and try to understand"

All my life that's all I've been doing: understand.

"For now, be patient. You might not like it; but it's the truth little Perla"

I nodded in reply.

Mama smiled at me, gave me a kiss on the forehead and standing up. The wind grow stronger and stronger that the leaves from the acacia tree all flew around us.

"Mama! When can I talk to you again?"

"When the time when you're in your darkest days anak"

The leaves circle around her, trying to separate me away yet mama stayed in her position, never budging and keeping her gaze and smile at me.

"I'm always with you anak, I hope one day you can find salvation. Accept what it is, let go of what it was, and have faith in what it will

be..."

I tried to reach out but something kept pulling me away. I want to cry out her name, hold mama's hand and never let go but I'm too far away now.

And the only thing that comes to mind is that I'll see her once more someday, that thought enough already gives me strength to just stop and let it be...

"Mahal Kita anak... Mahal ki...a..."

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"Sweetheart?"

I flutter my eyes for what felt like the second time before sitting up and holding my head.

"Estonia...?"

He beamed and hugged me gently "yep! It's me! I didn't even realized it was you when I almost accidentally stepped on you"

Shaking my head softly, I tried to recall what happened. After I woke up, I immediately went to school and slept here at the main garden instead; I should really try to find my own area to hide.

"How did... You?"

"Well, I was going to wait here with Finland cause he went to grab

lunch when my walking stick hit someone on the ground, sleeping and who would've thought it was you" he explained cheerfully.

"How did you know it was me?"

He lightly slams his hand on his palm "simple, your scent"

"My scent?"

Unconsciously I held the sampaguita tucked on my ear "oh... I see"

"By the way, what are you doing here? Sleeping?"

I look around and saw students walking around the outdoor corridors. I held my head again and realize that I didn't attend the morning class.

I skipped half the day it feels so weird.

"I'm... Trying to avoid trouble"

Estonia was quiet for a second before chuckling "why are you trying to avoid them? You're supposed to face it head on!- also! Here"

Estonia removed the scarf he was using before wrapping it around me "it's already autumn and it's almost winter, sleeping out here is like sleeping in the freezer"

I examined the scarf around me and it smells like him, warm and fuzzy.

"Thank you, Estonia"

"Gosh, I wish I can see you smile"

I can't tell him that I didn't...

"Maybe it's best if I go back to the dorm, I'm really not feeling well" I helped Estonia stand up after me and dusted my skirt afterwards.

"Eh? Really? Why didn't you just stayed in the first place?"

"I don't know..."

Estonia furrowed his eyebrows and opened his eyes, revealing that clouded blue eyes. It's somehow attractive in its own ways but at the same time; you're aware that the person who has it can see nothing but darkness though Estonia is always full of light.

"Sweetheart, are you okay? Did something happen last week when you were on rest?"

"No, I'm okay, it's okay. I'm simply feeling light headed"

"No you're not okay, I can tell, and as your- well... *One* of your fated pairs"

I didn't like the sound of that, it makes it look like I'm having a collection; it's nauseating.

"Don't I deserve to have the share of your burden?"

Estonia held my hand firmly before pressing his lips on my forehead and staying in that position.

"Please tell me, I haven't been able to talk to you for so long"

I soften my eyes, pushing him gently from me and releasing his hand "it's really nothing, but thanks for the offer Estonia"

With that I turn to my heel, picked up my bag and walked back to the dorm.

It's not like I don't want to say it; believe me I'm desperate to tell anyone who would listen but- this is a secret that we must keep.

We can't possibly let anyone know about that place; it's too dangerous.

While walking back, I took the East wing building as a shortcut. On the way, I saw Russia and Kazakhstan walking on the opposite direction towards me.

I immediately stop and walked to the stairs and hid behind it.

"And then I told him no which he didn't take lightly by the way"

"Why would you even do that?"

"Rusky, anyone would say no in my position!"

Their voices faded when they walked up the stairs; I sighed in relief before peeking out, looking around cautiously.

"I wann go back already..." I muttered to myself before running out and exiting the East wing building.

I catch for my breath for a second and continued walking.

Hopefully I wouldn't bump into anyone anymor--

"Lotus!"

I halted and hesitate to turn around; knowing the person who calls me that nickname.

"Lotus!~"

I hear two people running up to me.

"Lotus?"

I glance back at them from my shoulder and forced a smile "good afternoon Vietnam, Iran"

Iran smiled widely and gave me a hug

"how are you feeling? I heard that you went out to different country to find something, what was it?"
Vietnam asked.

"I'd rather keep it to myself.." I replied.

Iran grins and signed: "*Egypt said you went treasure hunting! Can we know what it was?"*

I look away and shake my head "sorry, I'd rather not talk about it"

They must've noticed my uneasiness and stepped a little closer "are you okay?"

I look at Vietnam and smiled "yeah, I am, but I really just want to go back"

Vietnam and Iran looked at each other and nodded with a worried expression.

"Thank you..."

I sighed when I turn around and walked faster.

I really want to go to bed so bad.

I'm sure my subject teachers will ask me where I was so I'll just have to write an excuse letter. Is it even appropriate to write an excuse letter of me resting even after they gave me one week of rest?

This feels like I'm abusing my right as a student and leader.

I'll just have to be honest...

As I was walking back I heard distant shouting from the gate which of course I tried to ignore and keep on walking.

But the voice was somehow familiar that I couldn't resist checking it out.

I massage my temple and internally scold myself on why I can't stick my nose to my own business instead?

"Hey! Ow! I'm a leader too! I'm just not a student here!" A cheery voice cried out.

I hid behind a tree and peek to see two guards; one of them carrying someone on their shoulder while they kick their legs and arms.

"I'm sorry sir, it's protocol that even if you're a leader you can't enter without valid permit from the student councils" the guard carrying him explained.

"Alright then, how can I ask for permission when you won't even let

me in!!!"

"You'll have to contact them through the website and have a schedule of visit"

"Like heck would I know that! Just because there's not much tourist in my country doesn't mean you have the right to carry me like a kid! Put me down!"

I blinked a few times when I recognize that person.

He huffs before his eyes caught me "ah!" He exclaimed and pointed at me "female leader! Yoo-hoo! It's me! Greenland!"

I really should've just went back to the dorm.

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Tectonics Cafe [11 : 25 am]

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"Hehehe, I should really apologize for causing such a mess at the front gate earlier"

Greenland chuckles nervously while stirring the spoon in his cup.

"It's okay, I'm sorry about how the guards treated you as well"

"Oh that's okay! Golly, I was just in a rush and I didn't know; they were simply doing their job"

I look down at the hot cocoa I ordered and stared at my small reflection from it "anyways, was there something you need?"

"Oh! Right, I just wanted to apologize again, for what happened at my country at illorsuit"

I blinked softly "ah, is that so? Don't worry, it should be us who's

apologizing"

He shakes his hand frantically and held the coffee cup"no, no! It's okay, I really should have warned you about the place"

"It was a good place either way"

He grins proudly "gosh, I don't get to hear that's everyday, especially that place"

"Well, you deserved it" I leaned the cup close to my lips and took a sip "but it is tragic that many people died there"

He nodded, placing his cup down "I used to run that place, there were many tourist too until..." His voice trails off, picking up his cup taking another long sip.

His eyes were distant as if recalling a painful memory "many of my people perished, the country I ran fell down before I rose up again. I had no one at all, my parents died when I was young so you can tell I was inexperienced"

I soften my gaze at him "but now, you were able to handle it'

He nodded "yeah, but I'm still not that qualified to be in Pangaea, having a low amount of tourist is hard for us leaders right?" He grins.

I chuckled and nod "I agree, I would often invite many people but most of those hard work were from my brother"

"Golly, I envy you that you have a sibling"

I smiled in response.

"But anyways, that's all I wanted to say but I'm also s-saying that my country is good you know? There's not always ice there! There are many good spots with no frequent tsunami and storm too! S-so... I don't want you to think my country is... Uhm..."

I giggled and held his hand; it was warm but trembling "your country is beautiful and I'd love to visit again"

His face brightens and smiled "thank you female leader!"

"Call me philipia"

"Philipia? Gosh what a pretty name! But you look like a fairy- ah! That's right, I'll call you miss fairy instead"

I laughed "if that's what you want, sure"

"Call me Greenland or what many people call me greeny!"

I nodded and offered a handshake "nice to meet you again, greeny"

He accepted it and we shook hands "it's a pleasure to meet you for the second time miss fairy~"

We talked for a while as we finish our drink before I checked the time at the café.

"I really should go back now"

"Oh! Right! Sorry, the conversation was too fun that I didn't realize the time"

I slide my bag on my shoulder and we both left the café.

"Well, nuuk is probably waiting for me now, I'll see you again sometime miss fairy"

I waved "see you again greeny"

"Hopefully next year I'll be able to attend Pangaea and have the qualifications to be a student" he said and pumps his fist.

I nodded "good luck, I'll be waiting for you"

He halted before his cheeks became flushed "o-oh? Gosh that made my chest flutter hahaha~ ba-byee~"

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Pangaea academy [dorm 1]

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I flop down on my bed when I finally arrived at my room and of course it was empty and no one was inside.

Everyone is definitely at school today but I still don't feel like going...

I sighed and removed my shoes and socks before massaging my feet.

I placed my bag on my study table and noticed the boxes that we found was still there. Sitting down on my chair, I collected what was all inside it and placed it in the box that had a puzzle.

Maybe it's best if I just burn it and not let anyone see it or even figure where that place is.

I took all the papers and the lighter Russia lend to me, before turning to my heel.

I stop and look back when I accidentally knock my bag (the one I used when I went to Maria makiling) which spilled all of its content.

I groaned "this day is the worse day..." I mumbled before placing the old papers on my bed and kneel down to pick up my bag.

While putting them inside, I stop and examined the group photo before picking it up.

The man at the middle is obviously papa but I don't recognize the others especially this woman besides him.

This is lihim and like her name, she's full of secrets.

But I wonder who this person is, their face had been ripped out as if no one wants anyone to find out who he is...

"Hmmm" I look over to my bag again and took the very old Kodak camera that won't work.

I can tell this was the camera that was used but I'm not sure if the pictures that were taken from this can still be retrieved. It's already rusty and barely hanging on together.

I sighed and placed it back in my bag again.

I look at the picture once more and leaned it close.

His uniform is familiar, I feel like I've seen it somewhere.

"Could it be...?"

I look over to the first box that we've found, the one that was buried much deeper than the two...

I immediately got up with the picture and bolted out of the room and back to the academy as I frantically press the button of the elevator.

When it opened, I got on and did the same to the button for the ground floor.

I was trembling inside that small enclosed room with my heart beating loudly. When the elevator open, I jumped out causing the person who was waiting to stumble to the side.

"I'm sorry!" I yelled and ran out of the building.

"Where are you... Where..."

Lunch time isn't over yet but it will be after about 20 minutes.

I ran inside the academy and up the stairs, looking for one person only.

"Philipia? Where have you been?" China asked.

I ran passed my own classroom where everyone saw me but I couldn't reply nor tell them what was happening.

I'm just in a hurry for answers.

Answers on why I feel this way.

This overwhelming sadness, this overwhelming anger.

It's all to much and I want someone to tell me the reason why.

"Excuse me! Coming through! I'm sorry!"

I went to the west wing building and third floor, careful not to push the other students that are walking inside.

I perked up when I saw someone who can tell me where he is "France!" I called and he stop to turn to me.

I stop and catch for my breath before him "philipia, what's the hurry?" He asked.

I steady my breathing and look up at france "wher--" my sentence was cut off when I caught him at the corner of my eye; walking in the corridor at the second floor East wing building.

"Nevermind!" I said and ran back down again.

"Wait! Philipia!!"

I didn't even think to wear my shoes and take one step down the stairs; I simply jumped down, skipping most of it and bolting to the east building.

When I caught up he was walking witj someone and now that I'm here, all I have to do is call his name.

"W-wait..."

I gasped for air but I forced my heavy legs to run once more "Italy!!!"

He stop, so did Mexico that's walking besides him.

"Oh? If it isn't philipia" he smiled which somehow gave a tight feeling in my chest.

"Amor, where's your shoes?" Mexico went to my aid and I held on to his shoulders.

"Italy!..."

"Uh, yes?"

Catching for my breath, I swallowed hard and showed him the picture that's all crumpled up "is... Is the man who's face had been removed from this picture..."

I breath out heavily and continued on my words "is it you?..."

Italy stood there, motionless, his gaze was locked on to mine...

But his response was a soft smile and a soft nod.

"Yes... That is me"

I insert his hands in his shirt before taking out the same triangular necklace that was in the box hanging around his neck.

"Then... You're part of..."

"Yes, philipia. I'm part of that club. The only remaining and surviving member of *samahang tatsulok*"

"Then you are"

A student walked pass us and I closed my mouth.

"It's best if we talk somewhere else with less crowd, hurry now, lunch will be over soon"

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Academy rooftop

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"This place should be enough" he said, as he looks the area making sure no one is around.

He clasps his hand and faced us with Mexico standing behind me.

"It should be okay if señor Mexico is with us. You know- Spanish to Spanish don't you agree?"

Mexico furrowed his eyebrows and nod in reply.

"Meraviglioso~! Okay, you can now ask questions"

[TN: marvelous~!]

I swallowed a lump and opened my mouth.

"I..."

That's weird, I know I should have a million questions yet right now, there's nothing that comes to mind- nothing at all.

Italy noticed it so he sighed "okay, I'll make a question for you; how bout, why Kati and lihim made it? And for what reason? How bout that?"

I clenched on my fist and nodded.

"Hahaha. Okay, well let's see. I'm sure it was lihim's idea, she didn't give the full explanation but she did say that she simply '*wanted to keep Kati's attention elsewhere to avoid a certain tragedy*' of course I really didn't understood -even now I couldn't- but whatever her reason is, I'm sure it was for the greater good"

"How did you meet... Papa?" I asked, a question that finally popped out.

"Hmmm, I'm not entirely sure, cause it's been such a long time and my memory is a bit blur from those years of war- but I didn't met him by chance, Kati. He saved me and for that I owe my life to him"

"There was a war, the Risorgimento. While we were fighting, Kati and his group were already taking weapons, mining gold's and

stones behind my back. But I excused all of those when he came in to help, they blended in and we won so easily"

"And throughout the years, we've never had an easy victory. They were courageous, stepped into the battlefield without blinking an eye"

"They had nothing to protect themselves other than their itaks. Yet they were able to kill a lot of the enemies, slashing their weapon left and right with a confidence that of a lion"

"That war ended and I asked to join them in exchange they can keep what they stole. I went with them, met new people, learned their language, practiced the weapon they used, and stole with them as well. I never felt so alive in my life before that I dedicated my loyalty to him and to her: lihim"

Italy inserts his hand in his shirt again and takes out a locket, fiddling it and smiled.

"She was the most mysterious and bravest person I ever met. So anyways, that's how I met Kati and lihim"

I blinked a few times "papa and that woman... Lihim"

He nodded "ah yes, of course...Kati and lihim, those two were inseparable, always walking alongside each other, always with one another, saving each other, both of them got their backs..."

"Their love for each other were so strong one might even mistaken it to be romantic, but of course we both know Kati is hopelessly in love to Perla. Their relationship is just platonic..."

His eyes soften and distant "until..."

"Until?..."

He snaps back and smiles at me "anyways, anymore questions?"

I wanted to know what he was about to say but it's best to let it be.

So I simply nodded and swallowed hard, ignoring the chilly breeze

from the rooftop "why did papa agre--"

"And why not? Can't you see? If the world knows about it, not only do you have the most military power but also the riches, second in place after Pangaea"

"But it's wrong! Stealing other countries money and stones!"

"It's not wrong when nobody knows! Besides! Those vehicles? They were broken, thrown away and we simply took what was left and improved it! So there's nothing wrong about it, in fact you should be happy philipia"

"Me? Happy?"

"When Spain, Japan and America stole from you! We secretly took everything back! The others were just another bonus"

I shake my head, no matter what it is, it's still so wrong...

"For god's sake stop being such a goody two shoes philipia and accept it! More stones grow every decade or a year! It's not like we took literally everything! We only took what was necessary at that time because your country was falling! It's dying! And it's getting attacked one after another! Can you really blame us?!"

I couldn't reply.

"You did nothing anyways so you can't say what's wrong or right! People die everyday yet what you ever thought of at that time was festival and happy things that wouldn't exist if it weren't for constant killing!"

"Amigo italy, lower your voice..."

"She wants the truth Mexico, then I'll tell her the truth she desperately wants- it's quite obvious considering she ran out with no socks or shoes, just bare feet"

I stood straight and firmly placed my gaze at him "what is it? What more truth is th--"

"Kati's death was your fault"

My heart dropped, every strand of hair on my body stood and it feels like the chilly breeze just got ten times colder.

"My... Fault?"

Suddenly, Mexico stepped infront of me "señor Italy! I think that's enough" he held my hand and pulled me away "come now amor, you're freezing"

I didn't budge and stayed "tell me..."

Italy's smile turned frown, a dark shadow looming over his face "the reason why Kati died was because you stopped him, because his daughter thinks that a good few words in the middle of a war was a solution to a fight"

For a second, a memory flashed which made my head throb.

It was a short yet vivid memory of me being held down to the ground, my father's back facing me holding his itak above his head about to kill someone... Someone really important.

"*Papa! No!!!!"*

"Ngh..." I held my forehead and stagger a bit.

"Oh? Did a memory trigger? Did your alter remove that part of it because it was too painful?"

I sighed deeply and muttered a name "Joe..."

I was about to ask something else when the bell rang.

"Ah, lunch is over. If you have more questions just look for me in my room"

Italy walked passed me.

"Mexico, come now, I'm sure philipia wouldn't attend class today"

"No, I'm staying with amor"

I shake my head and removed his hands around me "it's fine... It's okay, go"

Mexico looked at me, hesitant but nodded. He kissed my cheek before following after Italy.

When the door closed, my legs gave in and I fall to the floor. I examined the picture again when a drop of water fell on to papa.

I look up to see if the sky was as sad as I am.

Or not...

It wasn't rain but my tears- my tears that clogged up all through the years.

I sobbed and pressed my forehead on the floor, whimpering and holding back my cry. Fat tears escaped from my eyes and it feels like if I scream the dam inside would break once more.

I bite my finger to hold myself back and punching the floor again, and again, and again. My fist is trembling so does my body.

"I'm sorry papa... It should've been me..."

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"Italy! Don't you think what you said to amor was too much?" I stop and turn to Mexico who's still at the stairs.

"No, what I said was the truth and if she can't accept it she's in denial" I replied and continued on my way.

Mexico persisted and stop his way infront of me "no! If you really did care about her father, you won't say that to his own daughter! Didn't you say you owed your life to hi--"

"To Kati!" I stated "I owe my life to Kati, not to her, not to anyone! I care about him and I care about her but her closed up mind thinking everything is all sunshine and rainbow? It's irritating!"

"Don't you think that he did what he did to protect her? To protect her innocence? Amigo she was only a kid back then!"

I look at him, bitterly "a kid? Do you think a kid! Would have a..." I bite back my words and sighed "look, I'm not sorry on what I did, I simply answered her unanswered question that she's been asking her whole life!"

"But to blame her?"

I scoff and raise my hand in the air "I did her a favor, that's it"

"Italy!" He called but I continued walking.

"If Kati was here, he wouldn't like what you did! Nor does that woman named lihim!"

I snapped and ran back to him, pushing him against the wall causing a few students walking by to flee.

"Don't you ever mention her name compadré... Leave her out of this..."

Mexico didn't react, he simply stared at me and smirked "you love that woman don't you?"

I harden my grip.

"I love amor too so I know how you feel"

Mexico pushed me off and fixed his shirt "hopefully in the future you won't have a child that will go through the same thing amor did- Karma is very... Scary"

He walked passed me after that pat on my shoulder "come now..."

As he walks away, his footsteps echoed in the hall.

"Lihim was..." I spoke which he stop his tracks to look over me his shoulder "she was my fated pair... And she's gone, like the wind that pass through temporarily"

Mexico nodded and continued walking "then, she's a very unlucky woman to be fated pair with a horrible person like you"

I narrowed my eyes at him and look away.

Sighing, I look down at my hands that I used to grabbed Mexico just now.

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I jolted when a knock erupted from my door.

"Goddess?" Germany called from the other side.

I coughed and shiver, removing the five layer blanket over me and I peeked at the door.

"Yes?"

"Are you okay? Your voice sounds scrawny"

I coughed and blew on a tissue on my night stand, turning the lamp I realize I forgot to turn my heater on.

"I'm okay... Is there something you need?"

"Ah, I was worried about you; they said you didn't come to class"

I coughed again and got off my bed, the floor was hard cold that it sends a shiver on my foot.

"Oh that? Yeah..."

"Would you like me to cook you something goddess? Brunei and I made soup for this cold autumn, winter is coming too"

I coughed and used the tissue to cover my mouth "no, I'm okay"

"Is that so? Then, uhhh I received a text from your brother, gregorio..."

I stop and press my forehead on the door "really? What did he said..."

"He wanted to meet you at mesozoic beach- my godess's why would he even ask to meet at the beach? That place is freezing"

I chuckled "typical brother Greg, tell him I'm on my way"

I look over to the clock that it's only 4 : 30 pm.

"Are you sure? You don't sound good"

"No, no I'm okay, please..."

"Okay..."

After that, Germany left and his footsteps faded.

I went to my bathroom and turned the faucet on which was cold like ice, I immediately draw my hand back from the sudden temperature but...

I want this cold.

I washed my face with it before leaving.

I wore a simple white shirt and pants with the jersey jacket of the P.E uniform. I'm sure this isn't enough to keep the cold away but, I don't want any warmth from anything right now.

I took a mask, bonnet, slippers and I'm ready to go.

Germany, Brunei, Malaysia and Israel were at the living room, Germany saw me first.

"Goddess, don't you think your clothes is too thin?"

I shake my head and continued walking to the door.

"Whoah, whoah, wait! Phil! Can't you at least wear another jacket? It's autumn!"

I ignore Brunei's statement and twist the doorknob open.

"Philipia!" Malaysia called which I stop and turn to him.

I don't want to talk to anyone else right now, my mind is too cloudy and overwhelmed with everything. I need brother Greg, to vent and release this sadness within me like he did with the incident with Tito.

"Ab-about the time..."

"I'm sorry Malaysia, I still have plans today..." I said and closed the door behind me.

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I don't know why brother Greg would call for me at this time at the beach but it's fine, I needed something to get my mind off.

A distraction.

I still want to ask Italy but, maybe I should just find the right time.

Now's not the time, I can't force everything...

"Pearl" I swiftly turn my head to brother Greg walking towards me with a more decent outfit for this season.

I beamed and pulled the mask down under my chin "brother Greg! Thank goodness!"

I feel like crying, I needed this, I can't talk to Tito since he's a busy man as a teacher, I can't talk to brother either otherwise he'll pull me back.

So I only have brother Greg right now.

I greeted him with a hug "what did you want to talk about?"

"Well that is--"

"Is it about the plan? Good thing, I needed something to distract and I wanted to talk to you about-"

"Pearl" he called and I stop.

"Yes?"

Brother Greg looks very serious and I have a bad feeling about this.

He removed my hand around him and he held it tight "is it true?"

I tilted my head to the side "what true?"

My heart is beating so fast.

"About you... Being pregnant...?"

Bathump.

"H-huh? C-come on brother Greg don't joke like that" I forced a laugh.

"I know... I went to the same hospital you were once in and someone I knew who works there asked me if I knew about it..."

I removed my hand from him and stepped back "she asked me if the rumor about a female leader being pregnant was true, and the only female leader I know who went on that hospital was you..."

He stared at me, straight in my eyes. I didn't even realize how much alike his eyes are to that of the planet, so bright, so brown like the ground and earth.

"So tell me honestly! Was it you?" He asked, anticipating yet at the same time; I feel like he already knew and he only wanted to confirm it.

He only wanted *me* to confirm it.

I took a deep breath, closed my eyes and answered "yes... I was"

Brother Greg stagger back, his breathing became rapid. This must've been a shocking news to him- anyone would react the same.

"Why...? Why didn't you tell me?" He sound more hurt than angry.

"Why? How?! Were you... Or was it with consent...?"

No words were needed, I simply shake my head and he immediately knew what it meant.

"Fuck!" He kicked the sand; started pacing back and forth, scratching his head, squatting down, groaning- brother Greg was confused, angry and a mix of hatred.

"Who?!"

I shake my head which angered him more.

"DAMN IT PEARL TELL ME!!" He holds both my shoulders hard it made me wince in pain yet his hand was trembling.

"Who?..." He asked once more.

I let my head fall down, stopping the tears that's threatening to spill.

"Why didn't you tell me?! Why didn't you ask for my help?! Does Tito know?! Does everyone of those bastards know?!"

I nodded.

The hairs on my body stood when he screamed on the top of his lungs before falling on the sand and punching on it.

He stayed like that for 1 or maybe 2 minutes? I don't know, I

couldn't count it.

All I could know is that he was so angry his knuckles became red.

The shore wasn't far from us and the seagulls would cry.

In this peace, his voice spoke.

"Why are you so defenseless pearl?..." He muttered but enough for me to hear through the howling wind from the beach.

"Why are you so... Why are you always...."

Brother Greg stood up and I simply watch his every move. I can't say anything, no words would form.

"What am I pearl!? Why am I here?! Tell me!"

I shake my head again.

"Who did it?! Pearl! WHO DID IT?!"

I pushed him off of me and yelled "and what will you do?! What will you do when you knew who did it?! Are you going to beat him too? Put him in jail?!"

"I will not just put him in jail! I'll make him suffer and I'll break his bones!"

"Then what?! That already happened yet he can't be put in jail! And I don't want him in jail!"

"Enough pearl! Enough with that! Stop being naive! Stop being forgiving! There's a limit to it and you have to limit yourself!"

"Forgiveness is all I have brother Greg! It's the only thing that's keeping me sane..."

He shakes his head and asked once more "who?... Pearl tell me or I'll find it out mys--"

"It was Spain..." I sobbed "and yes... Tethys tried to do it, they tried to erase his memories, my friends beat him- and they think I don't

know... But I did cause I'm not stupid..."

Tears rolled down my cheeks, the only warm thing present to me.

"That motherfucker..."

"There! You know! what are you going to do now brother Greg? What are you gonna do that strong leaders haven't done yet?!"

I wipe the tears blocking my vision and faced him again "you act like a big brother now when the time I needed you... When *we* needed you! You were gone! You were fighting for someone else you didn't even visit even now you haven't even done it!"

"I can't go home and you know that pearl!"

"Yeah I do! I know you can't go home because you're a coward! You're scared that brother will kill you? Brother Greg, he needed you too! You're his twin his other half! He needed you to run the country!"

I bite my lower lip with my eyes that wouldn't stop producing these salty tears.

"But your help was nowhere when you're here oggling with different women, intercoursing one after another like a rabbit in heat..."

I stepped closer to him "where were you when the Spaniards attacked? Where were you when Americans attacked? And where were you when Japanese attacked?! You only showed yourself now when I came here! So don't act like a big brother to me when the moment you left our country you lost all the rights to even concern yourself to me!"

"I don't need your protection anymore! Truth be told I already removed you from my life but you just forced your way into it and I simply accepted it!"

He sighed "pearl, the reason I left was because martial wanted the title, he wanted to be next in line, and I was scouted by the most powerful leader!"

I shake my head "no... Brother didn't wanted the title, he never did, it was you who assumed he wanted it when you saw how devastated he was when papa chose you to be the next leader; was because you'll carry the burden!"

"Papa didn't want me to be the next, he didn't want brother nor you! Or any of us to be the next leader because of the burden, the pain! But after that, you left... You didn't say anything to him, like you left him because of your assumptions..."

"And with Pangaea? The people who were scouted by them always had the chance to go home... Yet why didn't you?"

Brother Greg didn't reply, he only looked at me with no words to speak.

I chuckled bitterly "I guess it runs in the family huh? Being selfish..."

I wore my mask and hoodie "don't call me anymore, from now on; Forget you even had a sister and I'll forget I had a brother Greg"

I turn and walked off "goodbye... Gregorio"

"Pearl" he called but I stop and turn to him.

"My name is philipia, country leader of the Philippines, I have both the title and I govern a country. And you? You're a Pangaean, you belong here and not in my country... Know whom you speak to"

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I slammed the door behind me which caught their attention.

Malaysia and Indonesia were at yh living room. Germany, Israel and Brunei were at the dining table.

"Philip? What's wrong?" Brunei asked but I shake my head.

He stood up and approached me but I brush his hands off of me.

"Philip, tell me what happ--"

"Not now Brunei! If you are all going to scold me about my choice of clothes leave me alone! I'm not a child anymore! I can take care of myself! So please..." I begged "mind your own business..."

I went to my room and closed the door behind me, locking it before flopping on to my bed, not even bothering to change.

Everything is a mess.

The overwhelming sadness I felt when I discovered Papa's secret.

The truth that it was all me, that it was all my fault papa died.

And now... Brother greg.

"*I'll kill them...*"

"Not now red! if you want to protect me then go away! You cause me a headache you're no help! Go! Go away!!!!!!! Go awayyyyyyy!!!!"

My fault, It's all my fault, my fault! My fault!!! My fault!!!!!...

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I yawned and knock on the door to room 3.

"Hey Malaysia? Can I ask for that game you told me about? I just finished the whole story mode of the last one you lent me" I said yet nobody answered.

I knocked again and the door opens slightly, I pushed it open and peeked inside "helloooo???"

I look around and the place was empty.

"Where did they go?" I step inside and look at the kitchen where a half chopped carrot was on the cutting board.

They must've ran out of ingredients and only remembered it halfway.

"Okay, they went out I'll just go and steal it" I said to myself and grinned, feeling mischievous.

I walked inside the inner hall and search for Malaysia's room door "bingo" I cheered to myself and twist the doorknob which was surprisingly open.

I went inside his room and saw the game that's on his bed.

I giggled and sneakily snatched it "hehehehehhe..."

As I was about to leave, I stepped on to something wet "eww! what the heck? Is this pee?" I raise my feet and examined my now soaked sock.

I blinked a few times and followed the trail of the water that leads to philipia's room.

"Huh? Philipia?" I called and knocked on her door.

That reminds me, it's been another week that she was absent, I'm getting worried about her but Israel said that she won't talk to anyone and would only lock herself in her room. He would sometimes hear her go out at night but that's it.

After that, she would lock herself again.

I held the doorknob and it wouldn't budge "it's locked, philipia?" I knocked again- still no answer.

I tried budging the knob once more but to no avail it wouldn't.

"Philipia!" I yelled.

No answer.

I sighed and was about to give it up "maybe she spilled some water at the door" I reassured myself and was about to leave when the water that's coming out of the small gap under her door kept flowing even more.

Okay, I'm getting worried...

Knocking much harder I called again "philipia? Can you hear me? It's J!"

I leaned my close to the door, hoping to hear something- *anything.*

But all I could hear was the water running; possibly from her bathroom.

But why?

"Philipia!" I called again.

I clicked my tongue and decided to just kick the door open.

"philipia! Step away from the door!" I warned and kicked it again and again before it finally broke opened.

"Whoah!"

Large amount of water came flowing out that's coming from her bathroom.

"Philipia?!"

I ran inside; shivering from the cold that greeted me and pierced my skin.

"Philipia?" I called and went to her bathroom where the only source of light the dark room has.

As I got closer, there was a small pool forming inside and the crystal clear water was in deep crimson.

"Oh my god! Philipia!!" I stepped in and the bloody water splashed around, I turned the faucet off from the bathtub and dive my hand.

"Philipia!"

I pulled her out of the tub that's filled with water that is red. She was pale, no pulse and stone cold.

"Wake up! Wake up!" I started shaking her, leaned my ear close to her mouth to check for a breathing -which she wasn't-

"Shit! Philipia?! Wake up!" I exclaimed and dragged her out of the tub, it didn't even bother me that she was naked; what bothered me was that there was a huge vertical cut from both her wrists towards her forearms.

I gasped and unconsciously covered my mouth by how much blood was coming out. Her body was heavy and limp, there was no sign at all.

I glanced over to the cutter that's sitting on the soap rest of the tub.

Why didn't I felt this!? Why didn't the marks react?! Unless...

"Alter..." I mumbled.

Gently laying her down on her back I pressed both hands on her chest and started compression.

"Come on philipia... Come on..." I mumbled out in between.

I stop and performed two breaths to her lips and repeated the compressions again.

"Philipia!!!"

Frantically searching for my phone, I dialed an ambulance.

"622, what's your emergency?"

"Code diamond! I repeat code diamond! A leader is in need of ambulance, b-both wrist are cut and she lost a lot of blood! Get here

at the male academy right now!" I yelled.

"*Confirmed, an ambulance is on their way*"

"Hurry! I don't know how long she's been underwater! I already did CPR but she still wouldn't breath!"

Suddenly, philipia started coughing.

"Oh my god!" I dropped my phone and lifted her head "philipia? Can you hear me?"

Her eyes kept fluttering, she's in a daze, probably the lack of oxygen her brain had.

I stood up and pulled the towel that's hanging at the wall hook before wrapping it around her "holy shit philipia... Why... Why would you?"

I held her on my arms and shook her lightly to keep her awake.

Philipia flutter her eyes open and stared at me "J..." She called before placing her cold hand on my cheek.

I held it on mine "shh, it's okay the ambulance is coming"

I glanced at her hand where blood was still running down to her forearm.

"Damn it! Why won't it heal?!" I exclaimed and pulled long strips of tissue and pressed it on her wound, keeping a pressure.

I wasn't able to hear what she whispered when she fell unconscious again. I shake her body and checked for a breathing once more.

I sobbed and tears started to fall "where the fuck is the ambulance!"

I stood up and carried her cold limp body out of the room and ran out.

On the way, I saw South coming out "south!!!!" I yelled.

His mouth dropped when he saw me carrying philipia "what the

hell happened?! He exclaimed and immediately pressed her wound for pressure.

"She cut herself! Go and open the elevator! The ambulance are on their way!!!"

South held the door and we got inside.

I still kept shaking her but there was no longer a response.

"Why isn't it healing?!" He asked.

"I don't know either! My marks didn't even react either!"

The elevator stopped and opened.

We both ran out with South keeping the pressure on her wrists.

"There! The ambulance!" South pointed where a bunch of men came out from the ambulance with a gurney which I placed her down on it.

"Philipia... It's gonna be okay... It's gonna be okay"

Everything that had happened afterwards was a blur.

I went with the ambulance with south as I watched the people reviving philipia back.

The whole time, all I could think of was the blood that wouldn't stop, it was draining out the remaining life she had.

Philipia is never the type to do this... Unless she was pushed to the brink where she could no longer handle it.

"Philipia... What happened...?"

_____

< < < End of chapter 15 : Whelve

> > > Coming Chapter 16 : Epiphany

_____

Fact : Greg's new girlfriend is a nurse

Fact 2 : Laurasia was locked once more.

Fact 3 : The academy had a shape of a honeycomb.

Fact 4 : Both the winter and autumn uniform had been changed.

Fact 5 : Italy and lihim were the ones who brought the tanks and other weapons.

Fact 6 : Red and Alpha weren't the first protector alters.

Fact 7 : martial spoils little pup and his family.

Fact 8 : Cambodia's height is 6'2.

Fact 9 : France gave his chopper to philipia.

Fact 10 : You don't live once. You live everyday, you die once; make the most of it.

_____

[Merry Christmas and a happy new year...]

[I know it's late now but yeahhhhh I'm so sorry it's a late one... And yeah, I have no excuse anymore πˆπ]

[I'm just having writers block and I've been procrastinating and I dunno why πˆπ]

[Anyways, I know it's short, not the usual 10000+ words and I'm sorry about that]

[It's only 8000+ words]

[But hopefully on the next one I won't be distracted omg hahahah]

[Anyways, see ya on the next one]

[Much love ~]

..-. .-. .- -. -.-. .

Chapter 16 : Ephiphany

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image]

[There'll be grammatical errors and typos]

[Enjoy ~]

I'm drowning!

"Haaa!!! Nmhnn!!!!"

I can't keep myself in the surface! It's like something I can't see and can't feel is trying to pull me down!

I gasped and hold my breath again and again from this strong current.

It felt like I've been here for a long, long time. It's a miracle I'm not dead by drowning yet.

"Haaaa!!!!!!" I gasped out though once again, I was being pulled down.

As I thought about losing my strength. My arms and legs began to feel numb and wobbly.

I held my throat and tried to hold my breath for as long as I can, but it burns, it hurts.

I fixed my gazed at the surface and watch the bubbles that escapes from my mouth float upward, wishing I could join as well.

But then, something else started floating up other than bubbles.

Blood.

It was floating up and up. I followed the trail and it came from my wrist. Even under water, it felt like the hairs on my body stood when I saw

such a huge vertical cut on my arm.

I held it and kept a pressure but then, there was also another one on my other arm. I hugged myself and hoped for the best and just wait to die.

Until a voice called out my name in such panic.

"Philipia! Oh my god! Why..."

His voice was quivering in fear.

"Philipia!!! Philipia!"

He kept calling.

Somehow as I sink, I had the urge to reach my hand up and try to comfort whoever's voices it belonged.

"Wake up!"

Without thinking, wasting the small oxygen I have left. I called out his name.

"J...."

My body felt light and heavy, both freezing and burning. A mixture of in-between. I also felt warm and the next, I felt soft.

Just what is happening? What happened to me? Who's voices are these that kept ringing around me?

Why do I feel sad all of a sudden? What is this?

When my back had finally hit the sea floor, the sand slowly yet surely spread upon contact.

How weird, there's no fish, no corals.

It's just me and the sea.

It's so lonely down here. It's quiet but at the same time; relaxing.

I closed my eyes when I was beginning to feel dizzy. It must be the water

I'm trying to inhale getting into my head.

In the silence, I heard a muffled splash from above.

I open my eyes to see what it was yet all I could see was someone's silhouette swimming down and reaching their hand to me.

I didn't even think twice to reach my hand as well. Yearning for their touch and wrap their hands around mine.

"Silly girl, you never really change" the voice said before a strong current started to push me up from the sea floor.

My hand refused to let go of the person who reached down to me. Even though the water was strong that it's pulling me upward, they stayed in place: unaffected.

"Go..." They said and I did. Releasing their hand, the water current pushes me up and spits me out of the sea.

Who was that? Why did their voice sound so gentle and warm?

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I jolted and gasped, my eyes shot open and frantically looked around.

Where am I? Why can't I move? Why does my body feel so painful?

How did I get here?

Just...

Trying to feel every part of my body, I forced to move my finger.

Then one by one I was able to move all of them.

I groaned when I forced my hand to move and try to remove the mask that feels like it's suffocating me.

But I stop to examine my arm. There was a bandage wrapped around, It feels recent too was someone just here to change it?

I look to my right where the monitor is and beside it is an IV drop.

I'm in a hospital.

I moved my other hand and examined them both. Why did I have bandages on my arms?

"Oh..."

I just remembered. When I was trying to take a bath, I heard Maria Clara's voice: my suicidal alter.

Her voice really is manipulating and controlling that she can make you switch with her to kill herself. I guess she thinks this body is hers when the strong desire to die is there.

We had a co-concious state that makes me aware of what she's doing and making me watch it too.

Filling the tab and getting inside it before cutting my arm was not what I wanted. Not only that, she made my body refuse to heal it and now...

I sighed and slowly drop them to my sides. I turn to the clock which states that it was already 11:00 pm.

How long was I out? Has it been days? Weeks? Months?

Where are the nurse? Is someone here to help me?

Now that I think about it.

Who helped me?

"***Philipia***!"

I flutter my eyes and held my forehead to recall J's frantic yells. He

must've been so scared I didn't mean to show him something grueling. But I'm also glad he came to my help.

I was trying to scream for help but Maria was still in control and I was only able to get back was when J pulled me out of the water.

I never should've pushed red away. I was just so tired and angry at everything.

Just what is happening to me...?

Examine the room once more, I realized how I hated hospital now. This plain white four walled room is not so welcoming.

"I guess I'll have to wait for someone to come..."

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I sigh and watch the smokes come out, only then I realized that winter is coming.

But then my stupid nephew chose the beach for a meeting place and here I am, at the corner on the bench, wrapping my hands gently as possible on the coffee that I bought at moonbucks.

I watched the sun slowly setting, creating that orange reflection on the beach. The same old scenery that most people see at paintings or movies.

Though, even in the middle of autumn; there are still people hanging out here.

Pangaean folks are weird.

Taking a sip from my coffee, I perked up when I heard footsteps on my right.

"Took you long enough" I said.

He scoffs and rolled his eyes before taking a sit next to me with a little distance in between "shut up" he snarled.

"Hmmm, so you want to hear about her condition?" I asked, not looking at his way.

He hummed in response.

I look back to him again and noticed the red color under his eyes. It's either he was drunk, high or crying (which is the least that I would expect).

I sighed and leaned my back on the bench "well, she's still in critical condition and still needs days to heal"

"So her cut really didn't heal"

"Once a female leader refuses to let her body heal, it won't. No matter how much you regret it and try to acknowledge it again, it's far too late and it'll only heal like an average person does"

He nodded lazily "I know that..."

I furrowed my eyebrows and straighten my back "okay, you've been like this for a days now, your eyes are much worse than before and your complexion isn't getting any better"

He glares at me and scoff "what the hell do you care?"

"Because if you collapse it'll be a problem for me"

Gregorio chuckled bitterly "a problem? Well sorry if I'm a problem too!"

I was taken aback monetarily before he hissed in pain and held his head.

"*Too*? What do you mean?" I asked.

"Fuck off, old man. It's none of your business"

"I can tolerate if you cuss at me and insult me, but if you won't tell me what the hell your problem is, then I'm afraid I can't help you"

"I don't need your help"

"Good! Then from now on, visit philipia yourself and not call out to me for report and meet up in places that are freezing!"

He was quiet for a second and mumbled enough for me to hear "I can't see her..."

I placed my arm on the back rest of the bench, and faced my body at him "then why?"

"Because!" He yelled, a few droplets of tears spilling. "Because she doesn't see me as her brother anymore..." His voice breaks, his lips tremble.

"You fought, didn't you?"

He didn't reply; although I didn't need a reply when it was already obvious.

"She was right anyways... I was a coward, afraid of my own twin, I was an idiot and useless of a brother. I couldn't be there for her before so I'm trying to be here for her...!" He sobbed. Hiding his face with his fist although it failed to catch some of his tears "but I was too late, the hole that I left in her heart I could no longer fill it up. I had no place in her heart anymore, I was simply forcing my way back into her life when all of her life- no. *Their* life! They didn't need my help"

I look down at the plastic cup on my lap. The warmth is slowly fading.

"Philipia is right, she doesn't need a brother like me... But she's still the little sister for me, she's still my little pearl" Gregorio looks up, size of a beads kept rolling down his cheeks "I didn't realize that my little pearl, my little sister had already grown into a fine and strong woman. I refused to believe that she's surpassed me and that she's even stronger than me, braver than me, fearless than me... I thought she needed me. But I was so wrong, it was me who needed her!"

He cried loudly that even some people passing by were looking over our way.

I'm sure he wouldn't want me to pat his back like I used to when he was a kid. So I let him release the remaining tears he couldn't release.

If Perla was here, she can make his sadness go away with just her smile. But sadly, Perla is gone.

"I want to visit her so bad Tito... I want to so bad but, I have to respect her wishes. That much at least I could prove I want myself back into her life. I still want to be part of her life"

His shoulders started shaking and his cries grew louder. I didn't know philipia's words had this much of an impact on him. He really loves philipia, but I'm going to have to take her side.

Besides, I'm the same.

I was foolish not to listen to her and grew angry at her like a kid when I thought they had forgotten me.

I was overflowing with regret at that time. And I think I'm the source of this. The reason why Spain did what he did was because of me, I made him remember. It should've been me who they punished.

Yet my actions was paid by both my niece and Spain.

I should try and learn from her. Learn to forget when there's nothing we can do to change the past. Because the past can only bind us when we're at the present where we build our future.

I sighed when Greg muffled his voice by covering his face.

I felt a sting in my chest so I couldn't help but rub circles on his back.

I expected him to slap my hand away but surprisingly, he didn't. He let me do what I'm doing.

"Dahan na... "

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When Gregorio finally calmed down. His eyes were redder than earlier, not only that; it became puffy too as well.

It looks like a bee stang his eyes. I want to laugh do bad but now's not a good time.

I hand him my handkerchief and he absentmindedly take it from my hand "you start taking care of yourself, I'll try and talk to philipia"

"You don't have to..."

"I have to and don't give yourself so much credit. We're all at fault here"

I look at him and his gaze was somewhere, I don't know if it's the ground or something on the ground or his mind is over the moon.

Ruffling his head, he snaps back and look at me "get yourself together, you're a soldier. Don't just toughen your body, toughen your heart and mind too"

He blinks softly and went back to staring at nothing before nodding lazily.

I sighed "well, get home safe"

He nod again. Turning to his heel, he started walking that kind of reminds me of a zombie who has no sense of direction. He also tripped to a small bump on the ground but he was able to recover from it.

"Sheesh...." I muttered and went back to the hospital.

"Sir jack?" The nurse at the reception called.

"Yeah?"

"The country leader patient had been reported to have woken up, I suggest you hurry up to her side si--"

I didn't even let her finish when I started racing to the elevator. Squeezing myself in with the nurse pushing the wheelchair, I immediately pushed the 35th floor.

Impatiently waiting for the elevator to arrive. It stopped to the floor of the nurse and the wheelchair before it closed again.

"Come on, come on, come on..." I kept muttering, tapping my feet and a bit jumpy from my position.

When I the elevator dings, I jumped out and ran to her room.

"Philipia!?" I exclaimed as I barged in.

My niece who had been unconscious for a week now, is sitting up on her bed without the oxygen mask anymore.

She slowly turns to me, showing no expression whatsoever.

Her eyes felt hollow yet her gaze seems to stab me. This is my niece, I'm sure of it, yet why do I feel hostility from her?

Can she not recognize me?

"Country leader jack" the doctor who finally noticed my presence turned to me "I am happy to announce that your niece is awake though she's still in critical condition but rest assured she will get all the help she needs" he said.

"D-does she not remember me?"

He thinks for a second and turn to philipia who's watching the nurse changing her bandage.

"I don't think she lost her memories, she was able to tell me earlier on what she last remember. Specifically the incident in her bathroom and the cuts she did"

"Why does she look at me... Like I'm a stranger?"

"It is possible that it's one of her many personalities but I'm not quite sure"

I furrowed my eyebrows "what personality?"

He looks at me questioningly "are you not aware?"

I shake my head in reply.

"She is diagnosed with DID or more known as split personality disorder. This is normal for people who went through a traumatic experience in their childhood. And as a defense mechanism, her personality was turned into two or more"

There's so much I didn't know...

"I see..."

When the nurses were done, philipia nods at them and they bowed at her "I'll come back again to give you the list of medications and the food she'll be eating as well as a donor for her blood"

"Donor?"

"Yes, specifically an Rh blood"

I blinked a few times, processing what he said "Rh?"

He fixed his glasses and flip the papers he has in hand "more known as the golden blood, very few people has this but we will see what we can do"

Golden blood type?

I turn to philipia who was quietly sitting on her bed, her head slightly looking at my way.

When the doctor and nurses left, they closed the door behind me and now it was just me and her.

"Philipia..."

"You look like you've seen a ghost Tito..." She spoke in a very weak voice.

"It's not like I want you dead, it's just I'm happy and ecstatic that you're awake"

"Hmmm... You don't look happy"

I sighed "I felt hostility from you, I thought you didn't remember me"

"I did? Hmmm... I'm sorry, I didn't know I looked at you that way"

I smiled and went to her side, holding her hands on mine "it's fine" I said and kisses the back of it "as long as you're alive and awake. That's what matters"

Philipia stares at my hand before removing it and closing it into a fist "please don't touch me so casually" she said.

I raise both of my hands "sorry, was it too cold? I did just came outside"

"That's not it, your hand is warm as it is. It's just... I don't like how it smells like someone I currently hate"

Hate. A word my niece rarely spoke or even do. But now, she said it and she's hating someone.

"Did you mean gregorio?" I asked, taking a chair and sitting down.

She nodded and look away "yes, gregorio del Pilar"

I rub the back of my neck, unsure on what to say and how I'll be able to convince my niece to forgive her brother.

"Philipia, Greg has been worried. Although he did what you told him to stay away from you but... I think if he goes further I won't be able to reach him"

Philipia suddenly glares at me "so getting angry at him isn't allowed? Even after what he did?"

"That's not what I mean"

"Then what is it that you mean?"

"I mean is that, try to hear his side"

"I heard enough of his side"

"Then what was his side of the story?"

She pursed her lips firmly before looking away, a pained expression painted on her face. I can tell this is hurting her and she has the right to be like this.

But I know, this isn't what she wants. That time with Gregorio. I'm sure he must've crossed the line and at bad timing, Philipia wasn't in the right state of mind either.

"You can take your time for as long as you need, I'm right here"

Philipia's eyes soften. She takes my hand and hold it close to her "Tito..."

"Yes?" I pat her head and leaned close.

"Can you be honest with me?"

I wasn't sure on what she meant but I nodded anyways.

"I want you to look me in the eyes and tell me the truth. I won't ask for any answers aside from yes or no"

"Alright"

She takes a deep breath before asking "was it also my fault mama died?"

Her question just sunk something in my stomach. Why would she even think of that? Who even made her think of that?.

"What? Why would you ask fo--"

"I said!" She exclaims, cutting my sentence off "yes or no answers

only"

I look at her directly in the eyes and answered "no" with confidence "whatever happened to your mother was her decision. She chose to stand unarmed infront of a gun was because she choose to do it"

"Hmm... I see"

"What made you think it was your fault?" I asked, obviously quite concerned.

"Since papa's death was my fault. Might as well make mama's death mine, with that. I don't have to know the truth one at a time and get hurt from it"

I shake my head "no! Kati's death wasn't your fault either!"

"You weren't at that war"

I flinched back. I couldn't retort back since it's true. I wasn't there but I did heard how he died and who killed him.

Philipia looks at me like how a small child would tell you cold facts that you cannot deny but at the same time, you can't make up an excuse either.

"Yes, I wasn't there but you know yourself it wasn't your fault"

"Oh I do know it was my fault... Deep down I can feel a guilt that I keep keep denying"

"Philipia..."

She chuckled and leaned back from the bed that was adjusted to a sitting position "I guess it really runs in the blood"

"What?"

She smiles at me quiet sadly.

"Mama was selfish that's why she died, Gregorio was selfish that's why he left, brother is selfish that's why he wants revenge and I'm

selfish that's why I wanted to die"

I was about to scold her when she cuts me off once more.

"That's why Maria Clara came out"

"Who's Maria... Clara?"

"My suicidal alter. Maybe, the reason why she came out was because deep down -and she knows- that I wanted to die"

There was nothing else I could say. In fact, this whole split personality thing is new to me. I didn't even know it exist better yet know about it.

Philipia sighs heavily and turn towards the window where it was closed with the blinds.

"Life is so... Painful"

How am I gonna fix this?

I stood up and open the blinds and roll it up for her; giving her a view to the sky stained with orange that fits this autumn season.

"Suicidal alter or not, you're alive because you want to live..." I spoke "you're alive now cause you fought desperately for it. Because deep down you wanted to live, deep down... You still want to see a new tomorrow"

I saw her lips quiver, like a kid who's on the verge of crying.

"Even if I wasn't there half of your life. At least I was there when you were a kid and I'm glad I was there because you are what you are is because I watched how it turned out to be"

I leaned on the window and smiled at her "I know you still bite the inside of your cheek when you try to hold back your tears, I know you still love chocolate, I know you still enjoy climbing trees, I know you still love to collect pearls, I know you still sway your little legs back and forth when you're bored, I know you liked sunflowers before sampaguita...."

She sniffled and a little muffled cry escaped.

"I know who you really are little Perla, and I know you like to nibble the sampaguita behind your ear when you're so focused, I know if you're really afraid or sad or happy or angry..."

She puffs her cheeks to try and hold back a cry "no you don't..." She mumbles.

I chuckked "My little niece, who do you think was the one who changed your diapers?" I chuckled

And that was the last straw. Brad size tears came rolling down her cheeks before answering "y-y-you..."

"That's right, me and you were much closer than you and Perla. So don't act tough around me, I'm your Tito for goodness sake"

Philipia clenched on to her blanket and cried. The same cry that Greg just did.

I sigh to myself when I'm still surrounded by kids.

"Dahan na..." I said and sat on her bed.

She cried even louder and hugged me, her trembling body made me hug her even tighter.

"I'm so sorry Tito! I'm so sorry I tried to kill myself! I'm sorry if I was selfish! I'm sorry if I didn't think what you'd feel!! I'm sorry for running away and going to your house to sleep without mama's permission!!"

I chuckled and bury my face on her shoulder "you still remember that?"

She nodded and still continuously crying- seriously. Greg said she's a fine and strong woman but the woman he described is a crying mess in my arms.

Kids will still be kids.

"I'm sorry Tito! I'm sorryyyy!!!"

"I know, I know... I Forgive you"

"I fought with kuya! I didn't mean what I said! I'm sorry!"

I chuckled and didn't realize that I also felt like crying. Her cries are really contagious.

"I know, that's why you must say you're sorry and that you'll talk to him"

She cried and said between her loud sobbing "y-yes Tito...! I'm really sorry!!!"

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Unlike gregorio earlier. Philipia still looked cute even after crying a bucket. I guess him and martial took over Kati who looks like a grandpa after crying.

Philipia blows her nose with the tissue I have before crumpling it and throwing it at the trashcan.

I chuckled by how adorable she is and hiccuped afterwards. I placed the tissue box on the counter side of her bed and pour her a glass of water that the nurse provided earlier.

"Drink, it'll make up for the tears"

She nodded and obediently drank.

I watch her slowly chug down that glass of water like a beer before sighing and giving it back to me.

"Do you want to eat?"

She shakes her head.

"Alright" I said and brush the back of my finger on her cheeks "I'm going to the doctor's office, I'll be back okay?"

She nodded.

I took my jacket that is on the backrest of the chair and wore it. As I walk to the door, I felt a gentle tug on me.

"Tito...?" She called.

I leaned down and replied "yeah?"

"I love you"

I laughed softly and kissed her forehead "I love you much more, pamangkin"

She smiled sweetly (finally) before leaning back. I turned on the switch to adjust her bed back down.

"Be back soon please"

I nodded "I won't be long"

As I left her room, I closed the door behind me and went to the office of her designated doctor.

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I pushed my door with my bag as I carry the cleaning materials in a blue bucket. Using my feet to close it behind me, I used my feet again to gently open the door to angel's room.

The four walled room with a simple design that matches her personality. The floor was still a bit soaked but that's easy to clean. Though what was hard to clean is the bathroom.

I walked inside and Japan was kneeled down on the tiles, brushing and scrubbing the blood off on each corners.

J was the first person to discover angel than us who's been here with her the whole time yet we- we all left and if it hadn't been for him.

Angel would've...

The thought of it already makes my heart clench.

I step to the side and lowered the bucket in the empty tub (a few red droplets of water still there) and turned the faucet on, filling it.

Yesterday was a mess. Students gathered around our dorm building and an ambulance driving off in full speed.

Blood trails were on the floor. Even at the lounge there was also blood.

And when we got back to our room, we noticed the blood trails leads to it and into angel's room.

We felt so stupid, but Malaysia was the most affected. He's been out of it and refuses to talk to me or to Indonesia- well basically, he wouldn't talk to anyone else.

Not only that, we discussed why both me and Brunei didn't even felt what angel felt. So there was only one explanation that could happen: an alter.

Every person who has split personalities had undergo trauma in their life, causing their personality to split and spread and create different versions of themselves.

Why didn't I even think that an alter stuck in some part of her dark past would exist?

My incompetence brought this upon her...

"Hey, the water is flowing"

I snapped back from Japan's hoarse voice and immediately turning the faucet off.

"Sorry..." I mumbled before taking the bucket full of water that it toppled down to the floor.

"Do you have a stronger bleach?"

I shake my head "this is the strongest one..."

"It's not enough..."

I look over to J. Head crouched down and his brushing was slow yet firm.

"It won't come off..." He sobbed "the blood just won't...c-come off..."

I've already cried enough last night- or so I thought. But J, who's trying hard not to let out a cry produced bead size tears that drops on the back of his hand.

"Hey, give me something stronger..."

"There's none, just stop"

"No!" He yelled, eyes bloodshot from continuous crying "give me something else that can even tear this whole room down! I don't want to see a single speck of it!..."

"There's none..."

His expression turned angry, then, sad then he breaks down and cried again. Screaming his lungs out while covering his face. Crouched down on the floor and just in pure pain.

I didn't have the words to comfort him, I don't even know what to do. So all I did was stay in that position and rub circles on his back while tears would sometimes roll down my cheek- the remaining ones that I couldn't cry out last night.

"It's my fault..." He said in between sobbing, barely forming those three words.

"Don't give yourself too much credit, none of us knew, none of us didn't even realize it..."

His voice started quivering and his body started trembling, stopping and trying to control is breathing whilst crying.

"You should've seen it Israel..." He said through gritted teeth "her body was so pale, she was cold, she was so light, she was lifeless, she had no warmth, and for a second she had no pulse..."

J looks up at me and held my collar, gripping on to them hard that I can see his veins pop out. His eyes was blinking rapidly, his lips trembling. His tears were clear, reflecting in his opal like eyes.

"If things were going to turn out this way... it'd have been better if I didn't realize my feelings"

I felt the pain in those words that he said.

In response to it?

None.

"Tell me, how can you make these tears stop?"

I look down and shake my head in response.

Even I want to know the answer to it.

J gritted his teeth and released me before stumbling back.

"Sorry, I just... Can't" he stood up and walked out of the room, closing the door behind him.

I sat there and blinked multiple times, refusing to let anymore tears to fall.

Angel isn't dead, she's still alive and she's still breathing. That's all that matters, that's all that's keeping me sane.

I look over to the brush that J was using and the area he was cleaning. Pouring it with a water, it cleared the bubble and shows me a clean tile that even the corners turned white. Unlike the rest of the floor and bathtub.

The sight of blood must've overwhelmed him, it did to me too. Witnessing this bloody scene before us.

The tub was filled with crimson water.

The floor was also bloody, sneered all over it and a single cutter resting on the soap box. Clean, sharp and glinting in the bright light.

I continued cleaning. Removing every single trace of red I could see.

"You've been busy..."

I turned around where Germs was standing by the bathroom door. I didn't even hear him come in.

"I'm already done"

"That's a shame..."

"Then why are you still here?"

Germany examines the bathroom before looking back to me "I knew"

"What?"

"I knew, the goddess was going through something but I didn't do anything. I was granting her wish to give her space and wanted to be alone if she wants, but I didn't think that leaving her alone would... Lead to this"

Twisting the cloth I used to wipe the walls, I hang them on the side mouth of the bucket before washing another one.

"There's no point regretting, what's done is done"

Germany stayed silent again. The only sound between us was the water rinsing off the dirt and blood.

When I was done, I placed the cloth on the lips of the bucket where

the first cloth was and washing my hands. I shake the water off and bend down to pick up the brushes and bottles of bleach.

"Such a beautiful room..." He said which caught me off guard. I stop and turn to Germany who's now in the middle of the room, looking around the designs.

The mini greenhouse where angel grows her own sampaguita and the source of the minty scent in the room. Pictures of her family hanging on the wall above her bed and resting on her bedside table. Her small piano. A bird stand. And her bed.

"Whenever I knock on to her door to call her when it's dinner time, I always get a glimpse of this room. That minty scent that pierces my nose... Really- it feels like this very room is goddess... This room itself is philipia. Bright and simple yet so beautiful" he said "you see, I literally didn't have anything- I knew something was wrong with my memory but I didn't question it. I keep asking myself why"

Germany walked to angel's bed and sat down. The soft cushion making him sink.

"But I didn't mind it. I ignored all my questions why I keep feeling like I'm missing something, why it feels like I'm not really me. So I waited, and waited, and waited. Nothing changed even though so many things had happened" he continued "Maybe there was a reason for it and I should've tried harder. I should've tried to be like many people and blend in. Act normal, try to be normal..."

He shakes his head in reply to his own sentence "but I wasn't aware that before I realized it, I already gave up on trying to mix in the world around me"

For a second, his shoulders started shaking. He bends down with his head sinking between his shoulders "But I w-was wrong..." Germany started sobbing "I did found someone who managed to shake up my heart... I finally realise how dazzling my world can be and all it takes was one person and one moment to tell me that..."

Germany faced me with an expression pf that of a little kid who looks like they just lost something precious to them. Clear tears

streams down his stupid face.

Clearly, it's unfamiliar to me, it makes me uncomfortable but it felt like Germany had been holding it all in.

"And now..." He sniffled and wipe his tears with his sleeves, not even bothering to remove his glasses "who knew loving someone can make me so vulnerable..."

I sighed and look down at the cleaning materials all inside the bucket. The bathroom too, was spotless. As if nothing had happened.

I walked out of the bathroom, turned the lights off and closed the door behind me. I pat Germany on his shoulder on the way "let's go... You can cry it all out tonight but you can't cry for the same reason again tomorrow"

Germany looks at me with a flushed face from crying "you don't seem to be affected Israel"

"I am!" I shout "I am affected as as everyone is... But crying won't help her either. And the fact you're crying like a bitch right now pisses me off, both you and J pisses me off. You cry as if she's dead, you cry as if you're mourning for her..."

I took a deep breath and sighed "I want to scream too, I want to burn this whole school down, I want to go wild, I want to drink the pain away, I want to kill myself as well but– I can't do any of those because I want to be well and healthy when angel comes back..."

I look down to Germany again "so wipe that snot off of your face and stay strong. If you can't do it for yourself do it for angel. She's goddess to you remember? You worship her you sick fuck, you pray to her like she's a deity! So get your shit together Germany! Because that's what you were!"

His eyes grew wide at that statement.

"Y-you met me before?"

"I did. And you were an asshole, a fucking sadist but I forgotten all

of those when angel came to my life. So please... Get up"

When the others and angel came back. They were all acting weird, though they cannot tell us what happened or what they found due to a promise of a leader -which is reckless and you'll be betting for a land on it- we decided not to press further until angel has given them a cue and permission to tell.

But Germany didn't promise he can't ask about his missing memories. And thus, he asked us, he asked me. We don't really have all the details of his past and story but to Germany, it was enough to fill in the blanks of his questions his whole life after waking up remembering nothing.

Germany sobbed one more time before taking out a handkerchief, wiping his face and blowing his nose onto it.

"Okay..." He muttered and stood up. I wrap an arm around him as we both walk out of angel's room.

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"Say ahhh"

"Ahhhh..." Philipia opens her mouth and ate the soup I helped her spoon. Now it really feels like I'm taking care of a little philipia.

She started to demand food in the most adorable childlike way when I came back from the doctor.

Even though she just woke up in a critical condition, her complexion is somehow bright and energetic.

"I want that cabbage please" she asks.

God I just wanna pinch her cheeks, that was so adorable...!!!

I held the urge and spoon the cabbage and she ate it. Now she reminds me like a baby chick.

"Tito?"

"Yeah?" I took the handkerchief and wipe the smudge from the side of her lips.

"I think I had a crush on you before"

I suddenly coughed for no reason and looks at her baffled "w-what????"

She tilts her head to the side "I think I might've had? A crush on you when I was a kid"

"How would I know? And why? How?"

She looks at me, her eyes widening as if she realized something "I had a crush on Tito!!!" She exclaimed and almost jumped from her position. Thank god the bowl I'm holding didn't spill.

"Y-yeah? Good for you"

"So this is what it feels!" She happily said while grinning "that short feeling of attachment, I immediately thought of it as a crush..."

I cleared my throat and sit a little farther away "good for you kiddo"

"What an odd and weird feeling, I remember my heart would race whenever I'm with Tito before, and I would always feel warm when I hug Tito too!"

I lean close and flicked her forehead.

"Ow!"

"Don't even think of those unnecessary feelings back again, that's dangerous" I scold.

She pouts and nodded "yes Tito, I just wanted to let you know. I never knew what a crush felt so I was just ecstatic"

I raise a brow "you don't? There's like a hundred good looking men in the academy and most of them are with you everyday"

She blinks a few times as if calculating what I said "oh" she replied "but I'm aware they feel different towards me"

"I can tell"

She smiles sadly and looks over to the window "I wonder how that feels, it must be amazing..."

"You don't know how?"

She shakes her head softly "I don't even know why they went in line for someone like me... Not only that, I was insensitive and ridiculously stupid" she chuckled and scratch her head.

I sigh and held her hand "you're not. You're just inexperienced"

She smiles at me and nodded "I think so too. But..."

"But?"

"Suddenly thinking of trying to fall in love is somehow making my heart clench and it... Scares me"

I placed the bowl down and leaned back with my hands as support "hmmmm, like you're scared cause it's new to you?"

"No, it's more like I fear it?"

"Fear? Perhaps you did experience it, I mean- you did just said you had a crush on me as a kid. So maybe back then, you did fall in love only to be hurt so bad"

Philipia didn't reply and thinks about what I just said.

Uh oh, was it the right advice? I mean, I know how love is and I fell in love before yet unfortunately I couldn't win.

"Anyways" I spoke and she looks at me. I take the bowl again and hands it to her "eat. Now"

She giggled and nodded "opo!"

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12: 30 am

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I groaned and shift position and came face to face to philipia. Oh right, I slept on her bed cause she insisted.

I sigh and sit up, rubbing my eyes and search for the pitcher of water at the side. Pouring myself one, I drank and shiver when I realize that the water is cold and so does the weather.

"Damn, I need to smoke..." I muttered before glancing back to philipia who's still sleeping soundly.

I smiled a little and poke her cheeks like I used to do when she was a kid. It was always a normal occurrence when philipia would disappear from their house and appear in mine (since we lived close to each other) I guess she really did had a strong attachment to me before.

Can't blame her though. Kati was busy training martial and Greg, whilst Perla would be busy with household chores. I guess she just want someone to play with.

Hmm...

I distinctly recalled often seeing her alone near the beach, singing to herself and collecting shells.

Ahhh, poor philipia.

I gently got off the bed, and take my jacket with a pack of cigarette before leaving the room, as I closed the door behind me quietly as possible.

I got on the elevator and pressed the first floor. When I arrived, I got out and shiver from the cold autumn wind.

Placing a cigar in my mouth and lighting it, someone walked up next to me. I didn't even need to look to know who it was.

"Well, if it isn't the heir of the whole continent" I scoff and blew the smokes out.

I look at my cigar before offering it to him "wanna take a puff? Or do you think you're too young to have one" I grinned.

He sighed disappointingly at me before taking it and taking a puff.

"Hello to you too, Jack" he said and gave the cigar back to me.

"Aren't you going to visit her?"

"I didn't want to overwhelm her"

"I'm sure she won't" I said and took a puff.

Tethys sighs and kicks a couple of dead autumn leaves from the ground "if you say so. But I'm gonna try and help her from the distance as much as possible"

I hand him the cigar and he took it.

"I see. How about the others though?"

He scoff "I'm sure they'll bomb her with reassuring useless words like 'thank goodness you're okay' etc..."

"Hmm, I guess they will, considering how attached they are too her"

Tethys laughed and hands me back the cigar "so do I, I didn't even know when it started"

I raised a brow "what did you like about my niece anyways?"

Tethys sighs and walks a few steps forward, looking at a tree that's slowly getting bald besides us.

"Her... Innocent and lost way of looking at the world. When I first saw her, I suddenly had this urge to shelter her and use her negative feelings to just keep her away from the dirt..."

The last part almost made me stop. Like- was he serious just now?

"I know, as her uncle you won't allow me to be with her- I can understand" he said, glancing at me at his shoulder "but the more I look at her, the more I fall. It's weird and it's scary. It just came to me and it just suddenly pop out of nowhere it's worrisome. But then..."

He chuckled, like recalling a memory.

"She told me not to fear death with anticipation in her eyes. That's when I knew that I lost"

Not to fear death? Thinking about what Tethys explained that she said it with a rather anticipating tone. For me, it's quite sad. Because deep down, philipia is tired.

And I don't know what to do or what to help her.

"Regardless, that's all I can for today, I'll come again tomorrow"

"Huh? Going now?"

"Of course, I just escaped today and I barely had any sleep"

I nodded and took one last puff "Kay" I simply replied and he walks away with a wave without looking at me.

I look at the cigar that's all used up before dropping it and stepping on it and picking it up again to throw it in the trashcan.

Once I got back, philipia was still asleep and still in the same position as earlier.

I stare at her sleeping form and brush the back of my fingers on her cheek.

"Hmm..."

I chuckled before going back to sleep, slightly shivering from the cold earlier as I cover myself with the blanket.

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10 : 20 am [Doctors office 56]

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"Huh? Golden blood?" I asked.

The doctor that was personally assigned for philipia nodded "yes, apparently, she has a rare blood type that only a few people have"

I furrow my eyebrows from his statement "you're telling me she has no blood type like AB- or A+?"

He shakes his head "honestly, she's the second person in this hospital to have the golden blood"

"Then who's the second person?"

The doctor looks at me for a second before taking a file from his drawer. He slides towards me and I didn't hesitate to look into it.

"What?"

He nodded "yes, he's the second person to have the golden blood"

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I sigh as I stare the the file the doctor gave me. Written on it were a list of people... Well- person. Who has that rare blood type.

"Tito!" Philipia beamed when I opened the door.

"Hey" I smiled and close the door behind me.

"How did it go? Will I be okay now?"

I sighed and sat down on the chair "yes but..."

She leans close, waiting for my next word "but?"

"Your blood type is rare, and there's only 1% of people who has these- although I didn't even know that the golden blood thingy exist"

Philipia tilts her head to the side "golden blood?"

I nodded "and there's only one person who has it who went to this hospital for a check up"

I hand her the same file and she reads it. Her eyes scan it for a second before it slowly went wide.

"Oh... Brother Greg"

"You don't have to force yourself and if you still don't want to talk to him. We can always find someone wh--"

She shakes her head and gave the file back "I want to... Talk to him"

I soften my expression and smile "okay, I'll text him to come over later"

Philipia looks at me before she reaches out for my hand "will that make Tito proud of me?"

I was surprised for a second but I immediately replied "of course. I've always been"

She grins "really? Oh yay~" she cheers and clasps her hands "if it will make Tito proud of me. I will talk to brother Greg even though I am still a bit mad"

I laughed and pat her "that's normal philipia, it's what makes you a responsible and sophisticated"

She grins "yes, Tito"

These days, she's been more talkative and would ask for my approval a lot like how she did back then.

Before, she wouldn't even ask for anything from me, but I guess she using the chance to let loose while she can before going back to the academy.

Though there's really something else I'm missing and I can't put my finger on it.

"Philipia?" I called and she turn to me.

"Yes?"

Is it okay to ask?

Ahhhh! Nevermind!

"W-woukd you like to take a walk when the doctor finally allow you?"

She nodded enthusiastically "yes please! I just feel very stuffy being cooped up in here all day"

"Who's fault was it?"

She pouts and points herself "mine, because I tried to hurt myself- which I already said I'm sorry"

I laughed and pat her head "I wasn't trying to make you feel guilty"

I stayed behind and talked with philipia to ease her boredom as we wait for Greg.

Although I don't think he's fit for a blood transfusion since he hasn't been taking care of himself.

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"It's been an hour and he's still not here" I mumbled while checking my phone "I'll go to his place instead, he hasn't seen my messages

either"

Philipia nodded "okay, take care Tito"

"Thanks" I winked and closed the floor behind me.

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Greg's house

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When I arrived back to this hellish house of his (god I hope there won't be anymore tissues or panties lying around) I step in his porch and knocked on the door.

"Gregorio!" I yelled and received no answer, not even a sound.

I knocked again, still no response.

"Hmm..."

Fishing for something in my pocket, I look around cautiously as to not appear suspicious.

"Let's do it old school" I mumbled and take out a Bobby pin (I always have one with me).

"Hmmm..." I stop and think for a minute when a much better idea came up.

Although I know how to open a door with a Bobby pin, it takes me a long time.

So the most approachable method would be...

Taking a rock and breaking his doorknob.

Or you know– break his window and climb inside.

"Ack! Tsk"

I coughed when the curtains suddenly produce thick dust, I swat the air and covered my nose as I stood up.

Ugh, I can tell he hasn't done any good cleaning at all. Fucking hell gregorio. You're just like Kati.

I squinted my eyes when the window I went through was through the kitchen. And the kitchen was a...

"Ugh, I don't have time for this"

It was just like three type 5 tornado's just came in to destroy the place.

That's a sock in a pot right? It's a sock right?

Just why? Why gregorio?

"Gregorio!" I yelled again when I heard soft thuds in the second floor, followed by soft clicks of bottles falling and hitting each other.

I can already tell why he wasn't answering earlier.

I went upstairs and to his room which I immediately covered my nose and mouth due to the strong smell of alcohol.

He was laying half naked on the floor, hugging a bunch of empty bottles while drooling.

"Tsk! Damn it gregorio!" I said and walks across the room to open his window and curtains (they also emitted thick dust).

"Argh! For fuck's sake old guy! What the hel--"

Before he could even finish his sentence, I punched him across the face "what the fuck have you been doing huh? Getting drunk day and night? And what the hell is with your house!? Try to live like a normal guy!" I exclaimed and step on his chest.

He groaned and held my ankle to move it but in his half drunken state, he wasn't able to.

"Agh! Damn it...! Get off you fuck face!"

"I'm not getting this off, in fact, I'm going to step on you harder"

And I did which he groaned even more "okay! Okay! You win!"

I sighed and step away "what the hell is happening to you?"

Gregorio slowly sits up and held his forehead. Bottles upon bottles rolling around the floor; all empty.

"I already told you didn't I?"

"So? Aren't you supposed to help yourself so you can help philipia?"

He punched the wooden floor that it slight cracked and yelled "WHAT IS IT TO YOU ANYWAYS?!"

I let my head fall back and massage the temple of my head "ughhhh... I can't believe you're perla's eldest kid..."

"Oh you're bringing up mama now? Go ahead! I always knew she was disappointed at me! And I always knew they wanted to get rid of me! I'm not like martial who's responsible and reliable! And I'm not like pearl who's kind and smart and has all the good genes! Go ahead and curse me out for all I fucking care! Nobody fucking cares anyways! Because I'm a fucking failure! And a waste! Even garbage won't accept me!"

I scoffed before bending down to grab his shoulder and punch him again.

"Wake the fuck up already! I don't give a shit about your emo phase, but for the love of anything holy at least try to be the big brother that philipia wants you to be! You're already a failure at first so don't prove it to her than you already did from the very beginning!"

I catch for my breath and roughly push him down.

"Tsk... The hell do you want?"

"Not me" I said and placed both hands on my waist "philipia wants you"

He flinched "what?"

"Philipia needs a blood donor and since her body is healing that of an average person, her blood is also the same"

"She needs my blood? What about yours?"

I rolled my eyes "would I even come here if I could? I'm a type AB-"

"So? What's her blood type? Why does she need mine?"

"You didn't know?"

Gregorio forced himself to stand up, still holding his head "no... I left the hospital when I went to get a check-up"

"You both have the golden blood"

Gregorio paused and look at me with a furrowed eyebrows (same reaction I did when I heard of it)

"Excuse me... Golden what?"

"Golden blood" I stated.

"My blood is red, I'm sure of that"

Oh fucking hell, I can't believe he is dumb. He's sort of like philipia; dense and oblivious but she has a different case- so does he.

"It's a blood type you idiot"

Suddenly. Greg groined and close his mouth "ugh... wait, give me a sec" he said and sprinted to his bathroom to throw up.

That's to be expected when you drink two cases of these beers.

I knelt down to pick up one bottle and nostalgia takes over me

"bluehorse, how nice"

This makes me recall my friends. I should try and invite them to Pangaea as professors or students.

"You done?" I called but I was answered with another sound ofo someone throwing up "disgusting"

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While gregorio takes a shower. I went ahead and did a quick cleaning in his room, of course I'm no longer surprised to see three boxes of empty condoms.

Kids today. I can't believe kids today do it too early whilst I who's older than them is still a virgin...

"Ah... I'm...actually not"

I blushed a little when I recalled a '*certain incident*'

Damn it! I wanted to forget it! Shitttttt!

"Why are you blushing while staring at my condom trashcan?"

I clicked my tongue and threw a pillow at him.

"Hey! What the hell?"

"Get dress and eat!" I huff and stormed out of his room.

I was already pissed when I came in here but I got even more pissed when I saw his living room and kitchen.

Although in his living room, there was someone on his sofa.

Sleeping and wrapped in a blanket though their hand is sticking out (definitely a woman)

Gregorio starts getting down and saw me firmly looking at the sofa "oh shit, I forgot about her"

I took a deep breath in and out before using my feet to shake the person "hey!"

"Don't treat a woman like that" he scold.

"Don't give me advice how to treat them you bastard" I said and shook the woman even harder.

"Mnhn~ Greg, not again. I can't give you blowjobs when I just fell asleep!" She muttered, although it didn't even faze gregorio when she said that with me inside the room.

He simply shakes his head "seriously, she isn't even that good"

I raised a brow and my eyes followed him when he went to his kitchen, ignoring this woman.

I look around and see no clothes scattered, there's was nothing upstairs too.

So she's basically clothed: good.

I kneeled down and pulled the blanket, revealing her face.

Ugh. What the hell? That's makeup?

I cleared my throat to which she slowly fluttered her eyes open "huh...? You're not- omg! I'm so sorry! I uh..." She shot up and leaned away, using the blanket as cover.

I smiled and put on my best charming look "ah, don't be frightened, I am simply gregorio's uncle"

I can tell she swooned "uhh h-hi, omg I didn't know his uncle was... Hot" she mumbled the last part.

"My, really? By the way, what's your name?"

"Oh it's uh... " She tucks in a strand of her hair behind her ear and bites her lower lip.

"It's Susan" she offers a handshake which I accept and kiss the back

of it. She jolted but kn a good way.

"Where are your bags and belongings?" I asked and she points it. Sitting on the corner of the other sofa.

I stood up and take it, giving it to her along with her shoes. I gesture to take her legs out which she oblige and I helped her wear her shoes. I can feel her shuddering from my hand sliding down her ankle and legs.

"T-thanks" she said.

"You're welcome, now..." My smile suddenly became menacing "get the fuck out"

She flinched but nodded while doing her best to give space and distance between us without breaking eye contact.

"G-greg?"

"Yeah?"

"Call me!" She shouts.

"No one's calling nobody again! Now scram!!"

"Eek!" She yelped and ran out of the house.

I sighed and dusted my hands before going to the kitchen (which was already cleaned).

The hell?

Not only that, Greg was already cooking and the pot with a sock on earlier was washed with the sock nowhere to be found.

I really wanna ask why there was a sock but I'm too tired to even deal with any bullshit.

Thank god he's sober now and his emo side is gone. I've seen that side of him before when we drank with him and martial and Kati before.

Although Perla was really mad at us but at least, they've become a man at that time.

"If you're gonna keep acting like that, you won't get a girlfriend" he said without looking at me and still stirring the soup he's cooking.

I leaned on the counter and cross my hands "I don't need a girlfriend"

"Uh huh, so you're gonna die a virgin?"

I scoff "I'm not a virgin..." I immediately slap my mouth close and nervously turn to Greg who was unfaze.

I sighed in relief.

"That's a surprise"

I flinched "y-yeah..."

"Who was it? Was it a one night stand? A hook up? FWB? Prostitute? Student?"

"What? Why would I fuck a student?"

He shrugged "it's the most popular ones in most porn sites- do you even watch porn?" He raise a brow at me.

"No! I don't watch po- why are we even talking about porn?"

He looks at me disdainful "poor guy" he said and looks down at my crotch.

I kicked his knee which he hissed at "don't talk about my sex life and call it poor– are you still drunk?"

He shake his head "nah, I'm sober now"

"Thought so. As if a switch just flipped. One moment you're being that emo kid and now you're here at the kitchen cooking like a man someone you're age and living alone"

"Shut up"

I sighed "and Perla was never disappointed at you"

He switched the stove off and replied "I know... I know mama was never the type to be disappointed, I just felt like shit when pearl..." His voice trails off.

Taking a mug from the cupboard, he fills the kettle pot with water, placed it on the stove and turning it on.

He sighs and placed both hands on the counter "but if pearl needs me. Then I won't hesitate...."

"Finally. Now '*you're*' sober"

"I was already sober when I threw up!"

I scoff "yeah, as if"

"Whatever- by the way, if we have a golden blood, did it came from papa?"

I shake my head "if it's from him then I would have one too, so the only explanations that you guys have one is from Perla"

"Huh... Mama sure is full of surprises"

Indeed.

"But if they'll need my blood, I gotta eat a lot on the way, but I'll take some for pearl too... Damn it I'm nervous I don't know why"

I chuckled "of course you are" I said as I watch him wash the termos.

Now that reminds me. I still don't know how I'm going to baptize philipia.

I look over to Greg and think for a second. Greg left the country and his last baptism never happened, though his birthmark (I saw earlier since he was half naked) wasn't matte like texture.

"Gregorio"

He groaned "it's Greg, don't call me gregorio old man" he stated but I ignored it.

"You never once went home after you left right?" I asked.

He looks at me and nodded "yeah. What? Are you gonna scold me now?"

I shake my head "no, I'm just wondering how you were baptized"

"Ah, I was baptized here. Mr. Pangaea helped me"

I flinched and look at him baffled "here? At Pangaea?"

He nods "y-yeah...? What? Why? What's with that face?"

"But... You can't be baptized here!"

"Well I did, sorry if it's makes you jealous"

I shake my head frantically with my hand "no, you don't understand. You can't be baptized here because--"

I was cut off when my cellphone started ringing. Fishing it out my pocket, I answered the call from the hospital.

"Yeah?"

[Excuse me sir, but a man claiming to be miss philipia's brother is here. We couldn't stop him and he already went to her room]

My stomach dropped and my heart almost stopped.

I made sure that martial won't know... How did he...

"I-is that so? I'll be back in a few minute" I said and end it.

Gregorio noticed my worried expression "you suddenly look pale, what happened." He asked.

"Martial is there..."

"What?!"

"Hurry the fuck up!"

He panicked and started looking back and forth at the kitchen "right! Uhhh.... Uhhh... "

"Gregorio!" I yelled when I was already at the front door.

"Screw it!" He exclaimed and grabbed a jacket that's on his sofa and wore it "wait, did you break my window?!"

"Does that fucking matter right now?!"

"Of course it does! I pay for it!"

"Shut up and just run!"

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I kept watching the blue sky outside and make scenarios in my head while I wait for Tito to come back.

I breath out and sway my feet left and right and would even poke my arms to see if it still hurts (which it does a little)

I sigh and leaned back "Tito... Where are you"

One thing I have noticed about myself after waking up was that I've felt more dependent on Tito, I yearn for his praise and presence like how I yearned for mama and papa's.

I'm probably a bother now but, it's not bad to do it once a while right?

I jumped a little when the door opened. I was about to greet the person who came in -though I assumed it was tito- but I stop and sat there, frozen.

Same mismatched eyes like mine with a cold gaze.

I clenched on to my blanket and mumble his name.

"Brother... Martial"

He narrowed his eyes at me which made me cower and lower my head.

He closed the door behind him and approached me. His footsteps sounded so heavy that it felt like the air inside was sucked dry.

"Philipia"

"Y-yes..."

"Look at me"

My body moved according to his command. Slowly raising my head up, my eyes looked directly at him.

"Why?" He asked. Eyes piercing through me.

My lips quiver and my voice refuse to answer him.

What do I even say? What kind of reply do I give that won't make brother angry than he already is?

"Answer me" he demanded.

I swallowed hard and took a deep breath before I replied "I don't know..."

It took me a few seconds to realize the burning pain on my cheek and that brother had slapped me.

Though the pain immediately subsided, it still caught me by surprised.

"Where did I go wrong? Where did I make a mistake in taking care of you and your life?"

I shrink between my shoulders and held my cheek. My other hand

clenched tight on the blanket and my eyes on it.

"You think that, whatever hell we went through was a joke that you'd easily give your life up for something petty?"

I shake my head.

"Then why?" He said through gritted teeth.

"I don't know..."

He grab both my shoulders and made me face him. I can see how angry he was that it made me shiver.

"IF YOU WANT TO DIE JUST FUCKING TELL ME AND I'LL END IT WITHOUT PAIN!" He yelled.

I tremble before him when I felt intense anger. It feels like he might snap any second and kill me on the spot.

I've never seen him this angry to me before. Usually, when he scolds me. He's still composed and able to keep a composure. But right now, the brother martial I know is burning in anger.

"Your life..." He gripped harder on my shoulders that even through the gloves, his nails sink in "your life... Belongs to me. No one is allowed to take your life except me!"

I nodded and felt my tears roll down my cheek while biting my lower lip.

"I'm s-sorry..."

He harshly push me away and took a deep breath at the corner of the room "utang na loob philipia.."

He kicked the small table which the vase on top of it shattered on the floor.

"UTANG NA LOOB!"

I flinched.

He turns to me again, took a deep breath and said "you're going home..."

My head shot up and was about to retort but he cut me off "you're coming home with me whether you like it... or not" he stated.

I close my mouth and lower my head, gripping on to the blanket as hard as I could while I stop the tears from flowing.

It's over... I can't fight back. Not when he's like this.

"Philipia!"

The door swang open and Tito stood there, breathing heavily and crouched down a little.

"Martial! Let me explain!" He said but either ignored him.

"Get the fuck away" brother snarled, walking pass Tito and bumping his shoulder.

I breath out when I felt like I've been holding it in the whole time. I reach my trembling hand to Tito who immediately ran to me and held it.

"What happened?" He asked while checking me "did he hurt you?"

He did slap me but that's it, although it's best if we don't tell Tito or else he'll scold brother.

"No. He didn't" I lied.

He sighed in relief before hugging me "I'm sorry I was late"

"It's okay..."

"I'll talk to martial okay? You stay right here" he was about to leave but I grab the end of his shirt.

"What is it?"

I want to go to brother. I want to comfort him and tell him nothing bad happened to me. I want to hug him and tell him how much I

missed him. I want to reassure him that I can still continue my purpose...

But I couldn't really ask for it. Because I'm still scared of him.

The look that he had was unexplainable.

"N-nothing"

Tito smiled and kissed me on the forehead "Greg will be up here, he just went to get himself checked first. So rest and I'll take care of martial"

I nodded and he walked out of the room before calling a nurse to clean the shattered vase on the floor.

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I can tell she lied. I can still see the redness on her cheek and I can already tell what martial did.

Seriously that kid.

I asked around to know where martial went and I'm not surprised when a nurse saw him go to the elevator and went to the top floor.

That nurse has good eyes huh, she must've checked martial out.

I massaged my temple and head over to the elevator.

I just dealt with Greg and now I have to deal with martial. Kati, your kids are troublesome- they're troublemakers like you once were!

When I arrived, I felt the cold, chilly autumn breeze at the top floor.

I try to warm myself up but to no avail I still shivered.

What is it with these twins and their fondness for meeting up places that is freezing?!

"D-damn it"

I walked in the empty and quiet hall of the top floor before I saw a slight open door that has stairs that leads to the rooftop.

"They really should put a sign to keep away..." I mumbled but I thought again. 'leaders' - he probably used his title or something.

I walked up the stairs and the door was open. I saw martial standing in the middle of the roof while looking up at the sky.

"Martial!" I called and shiver even more.

Damn ittttttt it's cold.

"What?"

"What the hell are you doing here?"

He scoff "am I not allowed to visit philipia who just tried to kill herself?"

"You have to understand her martial. She's going through something and she simply snapped, everyone has their own breaking point"

Martial turn to his heel and faced me "me and philipia had gone through hell together, not once did we had a breaking point" he said.

"martial, this isn't the past anymore"

"It is still the past, it just merged with the present and it won't produce a future"

I raised both hands in defeat "Okay, I understand. You all have different perspective, but did you really have to be so harsh on her?"

He stood there, looking at me with a dead look in his eyes.

Now that I'm getting a better look at him, I realized how the dark color under his eyes is worse than Greg.

"What Philipia did was foolish and selfish"

"You know better than anyone why martial"

"Exactly!" He yelled "I know her better than anyone else yet why? Whatever her reason is, it isn't as heavy as what we went through"

It feels like, he's on the verge of crying but he can't let a single tear out.

"So what I did is perfectly reasonable"

I crossed my hands and groaned "rather than punish her, shouldn't you comfort her? Tell her that everything will be ok--"

"Then what about me?" He cut me off "did anyone ever asked what I feel? How I feel? How I am? If everything in my job is okay? If the people still hate me? If I ever had a breaking point?!" He exclaimed with his voice breaking.

"Martial y--"

"I don't give a fuck about anyone right now- not you, not even Greg! Because bastards like you two don't even deserve to be remembered! So you wouldn't know how it feels to almost lose someone where your last drop of sanity is clinging to"

I narrowed my eyes at him.

"I'm taking philipia back whether you like it or not- and I don't even need your permission. Both you and Greg don't belong in my country anymore..."

I want to argue back but I know it won't do any good.

I think I nearly forgot he isn't the same martial I once trained and took care of.

That small little boy that would often chase me around and beg for

another session no longer exist.

What only exist now is a man who holds the title, governs a country and an aura that is suitable for a true country leader. His presence is overwhelming that it makes me feel like kneeling and paying my respect even though I'm also of royal blood.

This somehow reminds me of Mr. Pangaea.

But I know that this man who went through a lot of hardships and experience isn't your typical man and brother. His love for philipia goes beyond that of a sibling and it makes me worried.

When martial walks pass me, I said "if philipia refuse to go back home..."

"I'm not giving her a choice. I'm simply reminding her that she's going home"

His voice is ominous.

"We'll see..." I mumbled before glancing back at him from my shoulder as he went down the stairs.

I breath out and watch the smokes escape my mouth and blend in, in the air.

I look up to the sky and realized how cloudy this autumn season is now.

"Feels like the world is brewing another storm"

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Slowly unwrapping the bandage on my left arm, I examined the stitches on my wound and the corners of it.

It really didn't heal, it wouldn't heal either no matter how much I tried.

I pressed the wound gently and I jolted when I felt that painful prick and throbbing pain.

"Brother is right. Just why would I..."

Is it because of papa? The club he kept a secret? My friends? Brother Greg? Pressure?

What is it? Which is it?

This is giving me a headache.

I snapped back when the door opened. Brother Greg stood there with a bandaid on his left forearm.

Though he looks bad and his complexion isn't good.

His eyes soften as soon as he saw me before his eyes look down on to my arms where I unwrapped the bandage.

"You shouldn't do that" he said. He closed the door behind him, take the chair and sat down "here, I'll help you wrap it up again"

I lend my arm and he did his work.

There was silence between us in the room. I don't know where to start or should I even start but...

It feels like we haven't talked in a very long time which of course; isn't true.

"You can hate me if you want" he spoke.

I turn to him but his gaze stayed focus on my arm.

"I know I never really apologized from leaving you and everyone. I know that I haven't been the big brother you deserved. I know I didn't fulfill my promise to mama. I know I don't deserve your forgiveness... But, even as a last resort. I want to be of help, and if

by giving out my blood is what you need I'll gladly give it without asking for anything in return"

When he was done, he placed my arm down gently and sat straight.

"Even so, pearl. I'm sorry"

I look away and bite my lower lip.

"I can't hate you" I said "because I don't know how to hate someone. Or maybe I really am just naive not to hate you. I tried to, I kept telling myself that you abandoned me and that you don't have the right to care for me anymore- but still. I can't hate you- I want to! But I just can't!"

My lips quiver and my voice breaks but I still held the tears back.

I felt my eyes begin to water and I blink multiple times to try and stop it.

"You told me I shouldn't be so forgiving. But the only reason why I still haven't lost my mind from anger is because I try to forget and forgive- cause that's all I can do and all I know when you weren't there. If you're so willing to come back to my life and prove to be the big brother that I want then..."

I shut my eyes and took a deep breath. A tear fell and rolled down my cheek, every word that I held in all these time feels so heavy it hurts my chest.

"Pay attention to me this time. Spoil me, talk to me, give me affection that you weren't able to give, let me know that you're always there by my side, let me know that I have someone to talk to! Let me know I have someone I can trust! I think it's my turn for your hugs and jokes kuya... Cause that's all I ever asked even if you act so arrogant and cocky while telling everyone you know me better than anyone else!"

I sobbed when fat tears continuous to fall

"If you can't do any of those then get out of this room and pretend we never had this conversation and just come when I need

something from you..."

He was quiet the whole time. He looks at me with an expression I can't read.

I can't tell if he's guilty, sad, or both.

Or maybe it's just me who's sad and guilty. Giving him a choice when I'm not supposed to, using my power and authority to pressure him into choosing me: his sister that he abandoned.

I sobbed and cried, before I felt a strong arms hug me gently like I'm a fragile glass.

"If spoiling you is all that I need to get your forgiveness. Then I'll gladly do it. I'll give you everything, even if I have to put my life on the line I'll do it" he said while stroking my head "your forgiveness is worth to die for pearl. You don't have to give me a choice, because I don't even deserve it either"

When I felt a dam break inside. I cried and clutched on to him like how I did when I apologized to Tito.

He hushes me but the tears won't die down. It kept coming and coming like a never-ending waterfall.

"I love you pearl, I love you so much and I'm sorry... I'm sorry"

I couldn't reply when my tears ovecomes my sense of thinking.

Brother Greg kept whispering those words to me.

Although he said he'll do anything for my forgiveness.

But the moment I saw him for the first time in a long time. I already did. I was just afraid he'd leave again.

"There, there... Shhh..." He hushes me.

I hiccuped when I cried to much. My eyes was burning and it felt puffy, though I suddenly felt relieved.

Regardless, I still can't stop thinking about brother. Where could he be? Did the conversation between him and Tito went well?

Did it went well?

Do I still have to go back home?

I want to ask but, I just don't have the energy...

I didn't even realized, I had fallen asleep on brother Greg's shoulder.

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When I returned the cleaning materials in my room. I went to the lounge where everyone else is; all wearing a gloomy expressions.

Malaysia was hugging himself on the sofa, Indonesia was just staring blankly at a wall besides Malaysia. Brunei is at the kitchen and Germany sat down on the dining table.

When I hear something sizzling, I went to check Brunei and see him spacing out, staring directly at the pot that's boiling and spilling.

"Hey! Snap out of it!" I said and turned the stove off.

Brunei snaps back and turn to me "oh, I forgot I was... Cooking"

I sighed and cleaned the mess "get a grip Brunei"

"How can I?"

"And why not? Do you think just by spacing out and turning the kitchen into a mess will help angel?"

"You don't understand, Israel"

"Oh I do understand"

He threw the cup at the floor and yelled "NO YOU FUCKING DON'T!"

I shake my head "I understand" I firmly said "because I felt useless too, just like everyone else felt"

He didn't reply back and just glared at me.

"She was in this room and the only thing separating her from us was her door that we didn't even bother to knock and ask"

Germany came in "stop it you two" he said but we ignored him.

"So don't fucking tell me that I don't understand Brunei! Don't fucking say I don't..." I added.

I threw the kitchen towel at him and stormed out of the room.

I still see Malaysia in the same position though Indonesia stood up and was about to check up on us in the kitchen.

Now that I'm getting a closer look at him, his eyes were worse than J.

"What's going... On?" He asked monotonously.

He looks like he ran out of energy and the will to live.

"Nothing" I replied and head to the door "I'm gonna go out, I need air..."

As soon as I saw the hallway. I immediately recalled the bloody trail it had but now; the staff in the school had wiped it clean.

Even elevator, It had a pool of blood all the way to the lounge.

Yet I can't even see a speck of it anymore.

But in my eyes; it'll leave a permanent reminder that I've been careless and oblivious towards angel.

I breath out and stood right outside the building before staring melancholy at a certain tree. The leaves turned orange and slowly

one by one, fall to the ground.

I formed my hand into a fist which trembled by how frustrated I am.

I can hear my heart thumping inside my ears when I kept recalling the ambulance, the sound of it wailing, the frantic switching between red and blue, the thick blood trail that leads all the way to our room and into hers.

I take my phone and dialed angel's number.

[The number you've called is unavailable right now, please leave a message]

It says yet I redialed again, and again, and again...

Knowing she already lost her phone and no way of direct contact. Deep down I just wanted to know how she is and deep down, in my in denial mind. I wanted her to answer.

My hands began to shake and I couldn't really see much of the screen anymore.

Why is it getting blurry?

Plop.

One by one, a drop of water falls on my finger and on the screen of the phone.

I look up to see if the sky was gray but I realized, it wasn't the sky crying.

"... Angel.."

It was me.

I screamed then threw my phone on the ground before falling to my knees and sobbed uncontrollably.

"I'm sorry angel! I'm so sorry..." I whimpered.

While my eyes were glued on to the ground. A shadow loomed over me and I look up to see who it was.

"What do you need, Italy?" I snarled.

He breaths out "you just looked pathetic on the ground"

"Then get the fuck away and move along"

He chuckled "that's weird. Aren't you supposed to be the holy land?"

I stood up and grabbed him on his collar "you're still new here yet you act so mighty. Next time you stand before me and look down on what I say and do? I'm gonna fucking give you a hell of a time. My lands nickname has nothing to do with my personality, so screw off"

I released him harshly before picking up broken phone and walking away.

"I don't understand why you would cry for such person"

I stop on my track.

"It's really confusing why almost every country leader here likes her. I'm not hating it I'm just wondering. What did she do to make you fall to your knees and cry?"

I took a deep breath and faced him again.

"You of all people should know why" I replied.

"If you're talking about the Holocaust. Then it's not enough reason"

"Angel may be naive and somewhat oblivious of the people around her, but I've never met someone as strong and kind hearted like her. I don't need a bigger reason why I shouldn't love her because she loved me without a reason at all"

He looked confused in response.

"She loved me, as a true friend even if I was a complete stranger

who stumble upon her country, she loved me because she said I deserve it, she loved me because I yearned for it. Even if it was platonic. She still gave me warmth- that's the main reason why I loved her back, unconditionally"

After that. I turn to my heel and went back to the dorm.

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What a complicated person.

For what I know, you need a big reason to love someone.

At least that's what I know.

I turn to my heel and walk the other direction and saw Mexico walking towards me.

"Amico" I greeted and he saw me.

"Hello"

I chuckled "you're gloomy as well. All the leaders I saw today we're all gloomy too"

He sighs and fix his collar "you won't even understand, amigo"

"Why can't I?"

He didn't reply, but instead; he stares at me as if I already know the answer to it.

"Ahhhh, I see. You're saying half of it was my fault why she tried to kill herself?"

"I did not say that" he said and walked pass me.

"But that was what you mean"

Mexico stops and turn to me, holding back to even punch me on the face.

"I did not say it was your fault, all I'm saying is: you could've told her the truth in a slow and gentle manner"

I scoffed and placed both hands on my hips "yeah right, like that would get any better for her"

"Tell me Italy. Does this amuse you? Does it give you some sort of satisfaction that you were able to release that frustration on the daughter of your savior?"

I chuckled.

"Wow, you think I'm that heartless? I'm not a bully Mexico. The truth always hurts whether she likes it or not"

He nods and purses his lips "true" he said and walks back to me "then, congratulations. Now I know how it feels to lose someone"

His eyes became watery but he blinks as much as he can to stop it.

"She did not die, don't be so dramatic"

"No. The amor I once loved is no longer here, she's already dead. I'm sure, when she comes back she's someone different now. I'd rather accept she died as the amor I loved..."

With that, Mexico pats my shoulder and walks back to the building.

I sighed.

These people are very attached to her it's almost laughable.

Well, I was once the same but I quickly avert it when she disappeared.

Not everything we love stays.

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Where am I?

I'm sure I was talking to brother Greg before I... Fell asleep from crying.

I must've been a mess, I didn't wanna show brother that side of me. It makes me feel like I'm still the kid I am.

I sat up when I realized I was no longer in the hospital but in a room with a roof made out of dried leaves.

"Where..." I mumbled and examine myself.

I was still wearing the hospital gown but, I can see through myself with a white transparent cord connected to my stomach towards the other side of this room.

I stood up and opened the door that was all too familiar before I saw a scene that was buried deep in my memory.

"Stay here anak, papa will be back"

"But papa..."

"Please philipia... Listen to me okay?"

Papa; covered in blood from his chest all the way to his arms is kneeled on one knee. Reassuring a scared and trembling younger version of me.

Am I in my... Memories?

"Please stay safe..." My younger self trembled but forced a smile.

Papa smiled as well and kissed her forehead.

"I will... For now; stay hidden"

He stood up and covered her with a straw rug before going out of the

house.

I followed after him but the door blocked me, I couldn't move it or even open it.

Maybe I couldn't because this part of my memory is limited only in this house.

I walked over to my younger self and saw how scared, cold and alone she is. She was praying hard even as fat tears streams down her cheeks.

"It's scary isn't it?" I asked her even though she can't hear me "don't worry, you're not alone..."

After a few minutes, there were loud screams outside the hut and a torch was thrown inside, immediately setting the place on fire.

"Ahh!!" She screamed "papa!!!"

Bolting up, she ran outside and my body unconsciously followed after her as the cord on my stomach connected to her was tugging me along.

As she ran outside. The war got worse. People were killing each other with guns against itak, bullet against a blade, blood and sweat, screams and smokes.

It was a living nightmare. I wonder how she was able to handle it; my younger self.

"Papa!!" She shouts on the top of her lungs, running through dead bodies on the ground. The smell of thick blood in the air.

"Papa! Where are you!"

Suddenly, two people fought right infront of her, causing her to stop in her tracks. Her own people was down while using his itak to defend himself from a broken gun by the enemy.

He saw her and his eyes grew "miss philipia! You must hide!" He yelled and pushed the man off of him and grabbed her hands, away from the middle of the war.

"Papa! Where's papa!?"

"Miss philipia, you can't be outside!"

He kicked an enemy off and easily sliced his throat.

I felt myself shiver. But then, this shiver I felt was from my younger self, it seems her emotion is influencing me as well.

They continued running and I was behind them, watching as this man try to keep my younger self into safety.

I can't remember who he was but, he looks familiar. Where have I seen him before?

"Ah!"

All of a sudden, he was shot at the back by an enemy which he stumbled forward.

"Sir Kati is just up ahead! Please be safe miss philipia!"

"Y-you're bleeding"

"This is nothing, I'm ready to receive as many wounds to defend my country" he stabbed the ground and pushed himself up when an enemy soldier wearing a general's uniform stood not far from him.

"I'll take it from here, run as fast as you can miss philipia" he turns to her and grins, lips stained in blood "I'll die in honor of your name"

She shakes her head, refusing to accept that he's going to die- he knows he's going to die.

"Go miss!" He said once more, pulling the itak off the ground and turn into a fighting stance "KALAYAAN!!"

Charging against the general, they clashed their weapons and the younger me snapped back and ran.

She ran, and ran but my eyes were glued to the fight.

Even as the cord is pulling me, dragging me with her. I was watching.

I saw how it didn't even take long before that one person, died with dignity with a hundred bullets now buried in his body.

"Papa! Papa!"

If I were to dictate how old this version of myself is and it was compared to a commoner life, she would be around 15 years old.

But even with a royal blood in her veins. Her mind is still so fragile...

It didn't take long when we saw papa in the middle of a fight.

My younger self ran even faster before she tripped on a rock and stumbled forward. This caught their attention and turn to her.

"Philipia!" Papa yelled in concern.

And the man he's fighting with looked at her worriedly.

I stood there as I examine who the person papa was fighting with.

"Joe..." I muttered.

I can't recognize him this way. Wearing a military uniform, without his famous sunglasses, covered in bruises, cuts, muds and blood. Yet why does he look at my younger self with such eyes?

What was I to you before Joe? Why does your gaze right now hurts me?

I held my chest and I felt that throbbing.

Is it from my younger self or is it me?

"Why are you here?!"

"The house was... On fire.."

Papa used all his might to push Joe away and it succeed. Even if papa is talking to my younger self, his focus were on Joe who could attack any minute now.

"America..." She called and Joe looks back at her "please don't..."

He looked conflicted, his hands trembled around his gun.

"Philipia! Go and hide, now!"

America suddenly raised his gun "I'm sorry..." He mumbled.

But my younger self screamed to warn papa which he ultimately dodge and pushed Joe down, pushing his gun away.

As he raised his itak above his head, I saw the intense bloodlust in his eyes.

"Papa no!"

He stops and froze, eyes glued on to Joe.

But even if papa stop himself from killing him, he was stabbed from behind by one of Joe's men.

"No! Stand down!" Joe ordered but it was too late when the same general who killed the man who helped my youmger self earlier, ran infront of papa and shot him on the head.

"I said stand down!!" Joe yelled once more but he grabbed the gun and shot his own two men.

I watched as papa fall back, the sound around us mute itself.

I can feel ourselves shaking as the pain slowly builds up.

"PAPA!!!! NO!!!"

I can't seem to remember myself shouting in such sorrow, in such despair and that my own cry was so heart wrenching.

It felt like I was torn to pieces.

Joe watched my younger self stumble to even go to papa's body.

"No! No papa... No, please don't..." She kept muttering, hesitant to even touch him as she sees the bullet in his forehead.

His eyes were still open which of course, felt nauseating.

"I'm sorry... Mahal I..."

I flinched and turn to Joe.

My younger self look up to him and held her chest.

What is this overwhelming heartbreak?

I don't remember this part, I don't remember feeling this pain- this much unbearable pain.

My younger self cried as her eyes are locked on to Joe who seems to regret what happened.

But now that I think about it, it was never his fault. He wasn't the one who pulled the trigger; instead, he killed his own men to save the leader of his enemy.

Have I been remembering the past wrong? Or is this some sort of twisted memory that I, myself created?

"Mahal I didn't mean to..."

Before he could finish what he was about to say, a loud sound of trumpet echoed. A symbol that his men are starting to retreat.

He glance at her one more time before running away, leaving my younger self devastated as she try to deny the fact that papa is dead.

Papa lays lifeless on the ground and she cups his cheek, her tears dropping one by one on him.

Now it seems like her tears were his...

"Kati!!"

I turn around when a man walks in the scene, yelling papa's name.

"Kati!" He yelled once more and stop when he sees the aftermath.

It was Italy, wearing a different uniform but proudly holding the itak.

"No..." He stumbles back.

"It was my fault! I'm sorry!" My younger self cried "I tried to stop them! I tried! But papa...he..."

Italy's expression turned shocked to anger.

Rushing to papa's side, he pushed my younger self away "your fault?! Then get the fuck away!"

"I'm sorry!!! I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!!"

"Get away! Get away from Kati you!....GET AWAY!"

She flinched and out of fear she stood up as she ran.

Italy cried as kneeled before papa's body.

I wanted to see what else happened but my younger self ran away and into the wooden area.

When suddenly, she stop when another heartwrenching cry echoed.

It was a woman. Her cry was as painful as my younger self.

But even after that, she ran far away before arriving at a beach where there was no bodies, no blood, not even the scent of smoke.

Did she ran do far?

Did I ran so far at this time? I can't seem to recall.

She falls to her knees on the sand and watch as the seashore pusha and pull itself continuously.

She sobbed and hugged herself, unable to remove the scene that was engraved in her heart and memory.

This is so odd.

I can't seem to remember that this thing happened.

"I'm sorry... It was my fault, my fault... It was my fault... I'm sorry papa, I'll be good... I'll be good from now on... I'll be good, I beg you, I'll be good..."

I crouched down behind her and pat her back.

She's shaking really hard. I want to comfort her and tell her it's going to be okay. But I am only a figment in this memory of mine.

I can only watch and see what really happened.

Was it so painful that I unconsciously tried to forget?

"You did"

I flinched and swiftly look back when a man's voice spoke.

"Filip?"

A man, who has an entirely different face stood behind me with a sad smile.

"I was born at this very moment and because it was too painful, I had to remove it. Otherwise you'd be a walking broken doll"

"Is that why, it feels like I'm missing something?"

"Yeah. Truth be told, it was all me why you're the way you are- of course, your brother is also not guilty from it but. We did it to protect you"

"If you didn't..."

"If I didn't, you would be what you call a sociopath"

"A sociopath?"

"Sometimes being one is already from birth, but sometimes, someone becomes one to protect themselves from emotions they can't handle. It's normal that way when your brain has its own self defense mechanism"

I soften my gaze and look back to my younger self all curled into a ball. Chanting the words 'its all my fault'

"Filip, why are you showing me this?"

"Because I think it's time and I think you're strong enough to handle it all now"

I took a deep breath in and deep breath out "thank you, for protecting the younger me"

"It's my job, you created me. The least I could do for my creator is to protect her"

"You did everything you could"

"I would still be here you know, I'm not planning on leaving. But I am giving you back the emotions you missed"

I chuckled "so I'm no longer miss innocent?"

"That still depends, all I'm going to do is that you're no longer oblivious to your own feelings"

"Somehow it scares me"

"It is..."

Filip offers both of his hands.

I stood up, walk towards him and accept it "I want to wake up now"

He nodded and smiled.

"Sure darling"

He leaned close and kisses my forehead before everything around us slowly crumbles to dust.

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I can hear the sound of a heart monitor, I can hear my own

breathing, I can hear mumbled conversations.

One by one, I tried to move my fingers and flutter my eyes open.

"Oh are you saying it's my fault?!"

"Then what the hell did you do why she fell unconscious?!"

"I don't know man! We were talking heart to heart and all of a sudden she fainted and the monitor started beeping like crazy!"

"I swear Greg if you did something--"

"Like I said I DIDN'T PUTA!"

"Putang ina mo din! Don't yell at me!"

"You yelled at me first!"

"No, you did!"

"No, you did! You also broke my window!"

"DOES IT FUCKING MATTER RIGHT NOW!?"

"HELL YES IT MATTER! I PAID FOR IT!!!"

"Lower your voice you son of a--"

"Call mama a bitch and I'll fucking cut your virgin balls"

"THEY'RE NOT A VIRGIN ANYMORE!"

It's so noisy...

I groaned loud enough to get their attention and thank goodness it did.

Both of them swiftly turn to me and relief washed over their faces.

"Pearl!"

"Oh, my niece, you're awake"

I tried to say something but my voice won't come out, it's also being blocked by the oxygen mask.

"Take your time and rest first okay?"

My eyes were still heavy so I nodded and went back to sleep.

Though, even if I'm asleep I can still hear them arguing about leaving the stove and the kettle on.

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3 : 30 am

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It felt like I fell asleep for a long time even though that isn't true.

I sit up and realized it was in the middle of dawn and that Tito and brother Greg were asleep on the floor with a sleeping bag.

I removed the gas mask and the IV drop before getting off of my bed.

When I left the room, the quiet hospital hall was eerie yet it keeps me relaxed.

My legs still feel weak but I forced myself up to find brother.

My body moved on its own as if it knows where he is.

Getting on the elevator, I pressed the button for the top floor.

When I arrived, I walked to the corner where there were no lights on. But I held a certain knob of a certain door at the end of the dark hall before entering inside.

"You're here"

The room was filled with unused equipments and beds. One of them was where brother is sitting, solving a Rubiks cube.

"Even after so many days I still can't complete it" he said, eyes focused on the cube.

I closed the door behind me and approached him.

That's right. While I was unconscious, he whispered to me an instruction on where to meet him when I wake up.

And out of obedience to him, I followed without even trying.

"It's really annoying when someone who hasn't been with you in so long act like they know you, right?"

I nodded.

He chuckled and placed the cube besides him "but it's more annoying when you're trying to kill yourself when you have zero rights"

"Brother, it's my body I.."

Suddenly, I felt a heavy pressure on my body causing me to kneel down.

I've read about this.

A skill where only royals can do it: Forced submission.

"You were saying?"

I shake my head and gritted my teeth. My body feels like it's being crushed by a mountain.

"I have z-zero rights! Brother is right!"

The pressure disappeared and I catch for my breath.

"You never learn, do you philipia?"

"Brother, I can't be honest with you why I tried to kill myself

because I really don't know. For a split second it felt like something else was controlling me"

"An alter?"

I nodded "y-yes..."

"Hmmm, which one? What's its name?"

"My suicidal alter, Maria Clara"

Brother laughed "like from the novel? You have a bad sense of naming philipia"

Brother lifts my chin using his feet "but it irritates me when something is using what's mine. It'd be best to remove that parasite"

I shudder when I felt his deadly gaze.

"Anyways, I'm just here to remind you to start packing when you've recovered"

I clenched on to my dress and gathered all the courage I have before speaking.

"About that brother..."

He didn't reply. He continued to fix his gloves.

"I don't want to go home yet..."

"Hmm? I'm sorry, did I perhaps gave you a choice?"

I shake my head "no..."

"Good, now enough dawdling and recover fast"

Brother hops down from the unused bed and took the cube from it before walking towards the door.

My heart was racing so fast I'm afraid it might come out, but the moment brother leaves the room. It would be admitting that I'm following him back home.

Forcing myself to stand up, I ran towards brother and hug him from behind.

"Brother please! Listen to what I have to say first..."

He didn't reply.

"I want to stop spying..."

"That's why I'm taking you home"

"But I still want to stay in the academy!"

I felt him remove my hands and faced "how many times must I say--"

"After I finish the two years I have left in the academy... I'll come home and I'll never leave brother again, I'll obey whatever you say, I'll do anything... Just please"

His grip tightens, but I held on to his chest.

"Please... I promise I'll never ask for anything anymore, I'll forever stay with you..."

"Forever you say? That's harder to do than to say"

"Then I promise!"

"Staying with me, means you won't meet with your friends anymore. I'll be locking you in a cage if I have to"

I nodded and hugged him, burying my face on him.

"I'll gladly be brother's..."

His heartbeat was getting faster. But I'm still not sure if brother will accept my reques--

"Alright"

I flinched and slowly look up at him "really...?"

I was a bit taken aback but I'm not complaining.

"If it means letting you go for two years to have you all by myself. Fine, I'll agree"

I couldn't help but smile and giggle. Trying to hide it by burying my face on his chest.

"Will you stop that?"

I shake my head.

He sighs and lift my face up to him "the temptation to selfishly have you all to myself is really hard to resist"

I soften my eyes at brother.

"Brother do you... Love me?"

"I do, why are you asking?"

Now that filip somehow returned my common sense, I'm starting to think back on what brother had taught me. But it's best to know for sure.

I trust brother, I'm sure he wouldn't do such a thing.

"What I mean is, do you love me romantically?"

He couldn't reply immediately, but he showed no other expression.

"What makes you think that?"

"I'm was just thinking because of everything you taught me... About siblings"

"You're saying I'm a lying?"

I shake my head "n-no I'm not, I just wanted you to clarify"

Brother covered my eyes and I felt his lips brush against mine "I don't" he replied "like I said, this is normal. You shouldn't question what I do to you"

"But, brother Greg and I don't do it"

"His way of showing affection is different from mine"

"Oh..."

"Do you get it now?"

I nodded.

"Good"

Brother then pressed his lips to mine. It was short but it was somehow really different from our previous ones.

It was as if he was hungry...

It somehow made me feel different despite his answer.

Though I shouldn't anger him or question anymore, otherwise he might change his mind about me staying.

We both walked back to the elevator and stop on the floor where my room is.

"I'll be going home, I still have many things to do"

"Okay"

He caress my cheek and kissed my forehead "don't forget your promise"

"Yes, brother"

"I love you..."

I smiled and replied "I love you too"

He steps back in the elevator and our eyes still locked before the elevator closed.

Turning to my heel, I walked back to my room to see Tito and brother Greg still on the same position.

I guess they didn't notice me leaving, they must've been so tired.

Getting back on my bed, I placed the IV on me again by myself. Hissing from the sharp pain and the monitor started to beat again.

"Hmm..."

Covering myself with my blanket, I fell back into slumber once more.

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The next morning. Both brother and Tito were oblivious about the fact that I left in the middle of the night to convince brother to let me stay.

When Tito was stressing over brother, I already told him that I handled it. Though I didn't tell him what I promised in return.

"Good news pearl" brother came running in the room.

I placed my book down "what is it?"

"In a few more weeks you'll be discharged, it seems a part of your body is healing itself- well, minus the arm that would likely leave a scar but still"

I smiled "that's great"

He exhaled in relief and taking a seat "damn, I thought for sure you'd be staying here for a while. I know how much you dislike hospitals and considering what happened..." His voice fades.

I shake my head "no, it's okay"

Brother Greg rub the back of his neck, hesitating to say something.

"What is it?"

"I realized I haven't apologize to you about well... About 'that' incident and I poked my nose in a business that wasn't mine"

"It's okay brother Greg"

"Okay. Well, I'll be off somewhere first and I'll come back immediately Kay?"

I nodded "take care"

He gave me a quick peck on my cheek before leaving the room.

When I was left alone in the room, I leaned back and look outside my window. I stare at the blue sky and a few orange leaves would come flying around.

I hummed a song (the lullaby mama always sang) when I suddenly heard a phone vibrating.

I look over to the table and saw Tito's phone.

Did he perhaps forgot to bring it?

Getting off of my bed, I drag the IV stand towards the table and picked up his phone.

Caller: Tethys

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Answer Decline

I took a deep breath and answered the call.

*[Finally you picked up, I've been calling you a hundred times *sighs* I can't believe a continent leader is the one asking for updates on you about philia]*

I chuckled when I remained silent and listened.

[Hello? Why aren't you answering?]

"You sound so angry"

[Philia? Is this you?]

"Yes, it's me"

Tethys sighed in relief and laughed.

[Thank goodness, you're okay now... I've been thinking about you all day everyday, but I didn't want to bother you so I relay on jack for updates about your well-being]

"Thank you Tethys, but I'm okay now. In a few more weeks, I'll be discharged"

On the other side of the phone, it sounds like Tethys is on the verge of crying.

[Thank god... Oh thank god. When I heard about what happened to you, I lost all my common sense. It felt like the road I've been following suddenly disappeared. It scared the hell out of me when they told me you almost died...]

"I'm sorry, I won't do it again"

[It's okay, what matters is that your okay now. You're alive and I'm not simply hallucinating. My philia is alive]

"You've done so much for me Tethys, I don't know how to repay you"

[You don't have to. Just so you know my love is genuine and all I want is the best for you]

A smile made its way to my lips. I went back on my bed and sat down, the soft cushion making me sink.

[I want to see you so bad philia... But I can't go there. So I thought of a way to make you smile]

"What is it?"

[Go to your window, I wanna show you something]

I did as he asked and went to my window. Sliding the pane to the side. I was greeted by a cold breeze but it somehow made me relaxed.

[Are you looking outside now? What do you see?]

"Hmmm, since is atumn, the green trees all turned red, orange and brown. The leaves have all fallen and covers the whole ground as well"

[I knew you would say that... But I want you to look up]

I did as he told when a helicopter arrived and circled around the hospital. When I was watching it go round and round, I realize it was raining petals.

Pink, white and yellow petals. I laughed and caught one, leaning it to my nose.

"Are these..."

[Sampaguitas... They're for you. I'm sorry if that's all we can do for you]

"*We*? What do you mean?"

[Me and everyone did those. The flowers all came from Ukraine and Germany since the grew sampaguitas in their country. And the rest is history...]

I couldn't help but cry and smile at the same time.

I look down and saw many more patients coming out and they all tried to catch as many petals like I did.

"Thank you so much..."

[We all love you, philia. I love you, don't forget that okay? No matter what happens. My and our feelings won't change]

Hearing those words now that filip isn't blocking it. It feels eerie and it warms my heart.

"You said *I love you* to me Tethys. It made my heart all warm and fuzzy"

*[*Chuckles* really? Hahahah, that makes me happy]*

"I hope, I can return those three words with the same affection like you all have"

[You don't have to rush, for me. You're my one and only]

I giggled and felt my cheeks burn "somehow, that's kind of romantic"

[E-eh...?]

I look back when the door to my room open "oh there's my phone" Tito said.

I beamed and smiled "Tethys, Tito is here. I'll call you back later?"

[Wait, what do you mean roman--]

I didn't get to hear what he said afterwards when Tito takes the phone "hey!!! What were you talking about with my niece!?"

I giggled and look back out the window. The helicopter was gone but the petals were still scattering and raining around.

Tito sighed when he turned the phone off "so it was his doing huh? Those petals. Geez, he's just giving the people more work to do"

"He said it was for me Tito"

"Well, did you like it?"

I blushed and nodded "very much! My heart somehow feels all fluffy and light. It makes me feel like I'm flying"

Tito pats my head "if you say so"

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11 : 30 pm

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That night, Tito's phone started to vibrate again.

Fortunately, Tito is a heavy sleeper so taking his phone and answering it didn't even made him budge.

I drag my IV stand with me and went outside my room.

"Hello, Tethys"

[I knew you would answer]

"Aren't you supposed to be asleep now?"

[I should ask the same thing to you]

"I couldn't sleep"

[Same]

"Is your heir work still undone?"

[Well, I'm actually almost finish with my training]

"That's good to hear"

[Hey, you're outside your room are you?]

I look on both sides of the hall to see no one.

"How did you know?"

[Well...]

The elevator dings and the door opened. I walked a little bit closer when someone steps outside.

My eyes widen and smiled.

"There you are"

I turned the phone off and Tethys smiled back at me.

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"Here you go" Tethys hands me a chilled coke like the one he is drinking.

I take it and said "thank you"

Thankfully, the can was already open so I simply took a sip.

We sat at a lounge in the hospital with only a few patients and nurses inside.

"I was really happy when I heard your voice"

"I was also relieved"

Tethys placed his elbow on the table between us and his chin on his palm "even in a hospital gown, you still look breathtaking"

Bathump.

"Oh..." I held my chest.

"What's wrong?"

"Somehow, what you said made my heart flatter" I said.

Tethys studies me for a second before he realized what I meant "damn, aren't you expressive today?"

"Filip gave me back some of my emotions"

"Oh?"

"Now I can tell if someone likes me or not"

Tethys drinks his coke "hmm, well, I can't say I'm relieved to know that you're slightly aware now but. If that is what you want I support you no matter what"

I smiled and examine him.

"What's wrong?"

"I just started recalling the time when you were a mean and forceful person"

He laughed "that's in the past. And that was the time before I realize what I felt for you"

I held the can of coke close to me "it's somehow weird, now that I'm aware of what you mean. It makes things awkward?" I chuckled "It's really hard to explain"

"You said he gave you some of your emotions back right?"

I nodded "some of them. Since it's best to take it slow rather than force it all in one"

"I agree"

Tethys and I talked for a while before I saw the clock that it was already 3 am.

He also noticed the time and decided to go back to the room, though Tethys walked me up there.

"This is it" I said and we stop infront of the door.

"I pray that you'd be discharge soon, philia" he said and takes both my hands to kiss the back of it "may you be blessed"

"Thank you" I said and gave him a hug which he didn't hesitate to return.

I can feel his heartbeat, beating fast; it was the same as brother when I spoke to him.

"If you need something, you can always just ask me"

"Anything?"

"Of course, if you want the whole world I'll gladly give it to you"

I chuckled "that's a little exaggerating"

"You're talking to a continent leader"

"Okay. Then, I want to ask one thing"

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9 : 00 am [Monday]

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Two weeks in the hospital felt like two years.

I kept waking up in the same white ceiling in that same white walls and same white room.

I felt so cooped up that I can't wait to be out. Luckily, that day is today.

We went to see my doctor and was told about monthly checkups and what to do and not to do about my wound.

Fortunately even if my body refused to heal it now, it didn't take long for it to close up.

But I'll have to expect a huge scar on it though the doctor has a way to make it unnoticeable but time will only tell when it's fully recovered.

I took one more glance in this four walled room before closing the door behind me.

I followed after Tito and brother Greg to the elevator and out of the building.

"I'll drive" brother Greg said.

"No, I will"

"Fuck no, it's my car"

"But I'm your uncle"

"Screw you, you broke my window!"

"Really Greg?!"

I cleared my throat and they both stopped "it's best if brother Greg drives since it's his car"

Brother Greg gave Tito a smug smile, puffing his chest in victory whilst Tito rolled his eyes and stomps his way to the car.

As I got out, I covered my eyes from the bright sun before I inhaled that chilly autumn breeze.

"Finally I'm out"

I hurriedly followed after Tito and brother Greg to the car and sat at the back seat.

Tito sat on the passenger's seat and wore his seatbelt after.

"Alright, everyone ready?" Brother Greg asked.

"Your seatbelt, Greg"

"Yeah, yeah I will wear it"

"Wear it now, or I'll make you wear it"

Brother Greg immediately buckled his seatbelt on "there! You

happy?!"
Tito scoffs and crossed his arms.

Brother Greg glance at me through the rearview mirror "what's our destination today princess?" He winked.

I smiled and leaned back on my seat.

"Pangaea academy"

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< < < End of Chapter 16 : Ephiphany

> > > Coming Chapter 17 : Agathokakological

_____

Fact : Denmark is in a photography club

Fact 2 : Greg broke up with all of his booty call.

Fact 3 : Tethys's counsin: Atlantis, will arrive in winter.

Fact 4 : ASEAN and NATO have arrived.

Fact 5 : Russia haven't been attending school.

Fact 6 : Cambodia has arrived.

Fact 7 : Canada locked himself in his room.

Fact 8 : Athena had been observing philipia from afar.

Fact 9 : One of little pup's babies died.

Fact 10 : you're amazing when you can imagine what I write.

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[Hello everyone, I know I haven't been active lately but I just want you all to know I'm okay -the one's who were worried about me- and thank you for all your supports too ^\\^]

[I really cannot keep my promises lately huh? So to make up for all my absences and for your patience]

[I made this chapter longer -though it's the 4th draft I've made- and much more expressive]

[This chapter had a total of 21000+ wordsssss]

[Although the first and third drafts I made contained 30000+ words but I scratched it out cause I didn't like it UWU]

[I hope you enjoyed this chapter and see ya on the next one]

[Much love~~]

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Author's Note

Hello everyone. G.D here~

I'm sorry if I disappoint you that I've updated only to give you guys an author's note.

Truth be told, I'm quite ashamed considering a lot of you would wait patiently for my updates.

Unfortunately, it's been hard to make new chapters with all the problems the world still had as well as online school.

Unlike when I was still in senior high, I was still able to follow my schedules and make different drafts of chapters everyday until the next week would come where I would edit it for the last time before publishing.

But now, as a college student and with my chosen course. Following my schedule had been a disaster. I've been lacking sleep and been feeling under the weather a lot which drops my motivation to write.

As well as when I was positive.

It took a lot of my energy and a bit of my motivation to create the next chapters even though I've already made plans on what the ending and different plots it's gonna be.

But since we're already on book 2 and there's a lot of secrets and hidden code yet to be revealed– I've been itching to write and publish it as soon as I could.

But reality is harsh as well as college π^π

Anyways, the main reason for this author's note is me asking for a short hiatus or break. Both Pangaea book 2 and Mandela effect (myghad Mandela has short chapters yet I still can't even publish one, I'm so sorry π^π)

It'll just be a few months (hopefully) until I can get through the second and third semester.

(Also, it's been freezing in where I live)

I hope you can understand and be more patient for me until the end.

I promise I won't let you down once I publish and be active once again.

That's all for this author's note and see ya soon ^^

Much love <3

– G.D

Chapter 17 : Agathokakological

When the female leader opened her eyes, what she saw was not her brother and uncle sitting at the drivers' and passenger seat. Instead, what she saw was a lush green field, clear blue sky, warm afternoon breeze, and an acacia tree at the distant.

She already knew she's not in reality but inside her a mind, a place she created for comfort and even created Perla as a figment of her imagination. Philipia had always denied that Perla was gone, she had always feigned ignorance of the truth and made her create her own oasis where she can be at ease.

Without even doing anything and standing in place, a woman wearing a sampaguita flower tucked in her ear, tied with three ribbons that is mixed with blue, red and black. Stood right under the acacia tree.

If it was philipia before, she would've immediately ran towards her, hug her, and vent her frustrations. But right now, the philipia that's standing in place felt like an entirely different person.

Perla called, her hands reaching out waiting for hers, “My little Perla, come here”

Philipia felt her body move almost automatically but stop just in time.

“Whats wrong?”

The youth did not reply, only lowering her head.

She has to let go now, she has to stop this ridiculous self comfort where everything is not real. It's time for her to grow up, Perla is gone, her mother is gone, her father is gone. All that's left is her guidance and legacy of kindness.

This seemingly peaceful place where there's no one in it is nothing

but her own escape from reality.

Philipia spoke, almost like a whisper as if she's talking to herself, “You're not real”

'perla' looked broken hearted the way philipia imagined what would her reaction would be.

“Anak, what do you mean? I'm here, you're here, just come towards me and I'll keep you safe like I always did”

Taking a step back, the breeze suddenly stopped as if someone pressed the pause button. The leaves were all suspended midair, the howling sound disappeared, following by that ear wrenching flat line.

Philipia shakes her head, taking one step back at a time, “You're already dead mama, you're already dead”

A flash of memory came whereas a small philipia ran towards a body bathe in blood. Philipia squinted her eyes and sighed.

“Anak I'm still here”

Philipia looked at her ‘mother’ straight in the eyes. Those golden eyes were identical to hers. “It's time for you to rest” she muttered.

The place suddenly shattered like a mirror as if everything was just inside a glass. Outside of it was nothing but pitch black.

‘Perla’ smiled contentedly and said no more, waiting to be shattered as well and disappear. For a moment, philipia felt hesitant but she can no longer turn back. She stared unblinkingly at the figure standing underneath the acacia tree, then finally, disappeared.

The shards of glass obliterated like dust.

Philipia covered her face, tears escaping through her fingers and falling from a nonexistent floor. Hurriedly wiping the tears off of her eyes, she resolutely promised herself that she would no longer cry over her mother's death. It's been too long, this has been going on for too long, that happened so long ago that she would often

forget bits of pieces of it.

It's time for her to let go.

Observing her surroundings, philipia randomly ‘walked’ left. She walked for a while and saw a lamp light up besides a couch. Examing the normal looking single couch, she sat down and felt the soft cushion sinking to her weight.

Is this supposed to represent that she should take a rest? To sit down and think? Philipia is no longer surprised that she herself no longer know her own mind.

As she sat there, there came a muffled conversation. It seemed to be an argument but she cannot understand what they were saying, not only that, she also discovered that she can't get out of the couch and can only stay still.

She was stuck to it.

Moving her body forward, she tries to make out anything from the conversation.

“……who would even....!”

“…like I said!……cut it out!”

Suddenly, she felt someone leaning on the back of the couch, “Do not be scared”

Philipia cannot look back but she can recognize the owner of this voice. When she was having a nightmare of drowning, there was a man who pulled her out of it.

Philipia, “Are you...”

The voice chuckled softly, “Silly girl, looks like you've forgotten me?”

Relaxing her body, philipia also leaned back and touched the person's back.

Philipia, “How could I ever forget you? Maharlika”

Maharlika smiled, pushed himself off the couch and walked around to stand before the youth, “You've grown”

The man before philipia looked to be somewhere around 20 or 30. He was good looking, amber eyes, downturned shape that gives off a friendly, and approachable aura as well as an overflowing gentleness, his hair was shoulder length but it could not hide his masculinity. He wore a simple white sweater, gray pants and barefoot. His face was androgenous.

Philipia, “Have I?”

He nodded, kneeling before the youth to match her eye level.

Maharlika, “You have” as her self internal helper, he is pretty confident that the silly girl he had watched over the years is no longer the same.

After so much blood and sweat, it seems like she's broken out of her shell.

Philipia, “Have you been watching?”

Maharlika, soften his gaze and rubs her head, “Yes, I have. It was painful wasn't it?”

The youth nodded her head, bites her lower lip and hold back the tears that's about to spill. Maharlika felt devastated, assuring the youth to let it all out.

Maharlika, “You are strong, you are wise, you are loved. my silly girl, do not be saddened, it was all in your head, that wasn't your mother, all those words that she gave you all came from you. Yourself made it. It was you who comforted yourself, it was you who gave yourself a push, it was you who did it all”

Philipia did not reply and let the man, her alter, comfort her. Right now, she felt so exposed, she felt as if everyone can finally see through her, her impenetrable defense had finally crumbled into dust.

Suddenly, there came a sound of a car engine, and the muffled argument she heard earlier now became clear.

Maharlika, “You're waking up”

Philipia hurriedly said, “Wait I—”

Maharlika pressed a finger on her lips and he smiled. She could not help but obey. He said, “Everyone else is asleep. I'll be the one to keep you company”

The ‘everyone’ he meant was her other alters that were affected. As of now, only maharlika is conscious, looking after his silly girl from behind. Ever since Maria Clara took control and almost broke her mind and body, the alters fell into a deep slumber. And maharlika was pushed to the front.

Philipia soften her eyes nodded, “I'll wake up...”

She closed her eyes and felt her surroundings change. The nonexistent floor gave off a vibrating feeling, the soft couch turned firm yet comfortable.

It was mid autumn in Pangaea, the sky would often be gloomy and sunny but the temperature was always the same as the country was approaching winter, the trees were all busy shedding their brown and orange leaves, preparing for the winter season to arrive.

Philipia watched every passing building and people, sitting at the back of the car. She leans back and her heterochromatic eyes would wonder around, day dreaming as her brother and uncle debate over a chicken if it should be fried or boiled.

Greg clicked his tongue, “old man! Frying taste better! It naturally brings out the flavor!”

Jack ruffled his hair annoyingly and faced Greg like a scientist that's proving that the earth isn't flat, “Like I said! Boiling is the best way! Not only that it heats your body! It even heats your heart! Frying is nothing but oil and grease!”

Greg, “no wonder you look so old! Cause you're old school!”

Jack, “What does age have to do with chicken?!”

Philipia sighed and shake her head, debating whether she should interfere or not. But seeing the heated argument between the two, she simply leaned back again and ignore them, resuming to watch scenery outside the car.

Turns out, the muffled conversation she heard in her head was her brother and uncle debating about chicken.

They drove for another hour and finally, they were able to see the roof as well as the grandfather clock of the academy. Feeling nervous, philipia held her chest and thought how she should act when she sees everyone again.

Greg, “pearl, you alright?”

Philipia faced Greg and saw they stopped on a red light. She nodded in reply, “Just nervous”

Jack, “Why should you be nervous?”

The youth shrugged and did not reply anymore. Jack and Greg glanced at each other and thought that perhaps it would be best to remain silent. After all, she did just come out of the hospital and still in a daze, still comprehending everything around her.

The remaining car ride was quiet before Greg stop right Infront of the school gate.

Greg, “Aight, we're here”

Jack got out and so did philipia. Closing the door behind her. Examining the huge school and massive gate Infront of her, philipia felt like it was once again her first time, it felt foreign and that everything somehow changed.

Looking back to the car, jack carried his bag and Greg was leaning on his car and typing on his phone.

Jack, “You're not coming in with us?”

Greg shakes his head, and puts his phone away, “Still have some things to do but you can always call for me”

Philipia soften her gaze and gave her brother a hug, “Take care”

Greg hugged back even tighter, kissing the crown of her head, “You too— oh! Before I forget” he went back inside his car, took the small paper bag and hands it to her, “To contact me”

Philipia didn't even have to guess what it was and thought, ‘Another phone that I might possibly lose again’

Greg can already tell what she's thinking and ruffled her hair, giving it a messy appearance yet somehow, still adorable, “Don't worry, if it gets lost, I'll buy you a new one again ”

The youth nodded and hugged the new device her brother gave her like it was a Christmas present.

Not long after, jack and philipia walked towards the school and Greg waited outside till he can no longer see their backs. Lighting up a cigar, he puffed out the smokes and went inside his car then drove.

Fortunately, everyone was still in class so the campus was pretty much empty. Jack lead philipia to the north wing building all the way to the principals office.

Principal plume was overjoyed that her only female student had been discharge and is now out of the hospital. As a woman who cares about health and beauty, she was especially worried for philipia not only because she favor her, but because she's the only female she adore in this all boys school.

Principal plume explained that there will be a new building being built where female leaders can stay. Thinking that a female living in a dorm with males seemed inappropriate, the school had decided to create an extra dorm.

Jack scoffed and rolled his eyes. He thought ‘They thought of that too late’

The building consists of ten floors, each floors has 3 rooms and each rooms are for one leader.

Philipia, “does it mean, I'll be living alone?”

Principal plume, “My dear, are you afraid of being alone?”

Philipia could not reply immediately though she did not deny it. Principal plume saw her hesitation and thought of a way, “Worry not my dear, the building is still being constructed, in the meantime, you can either stay in your dorm or stay with your relative Jack”

Philipia didn't even hesitate to answer, “I'd like to stay with my uncle”

Jack was secretly relieved and happy that he can finally spend a lot of time with his niece.

Principal plume sighed. She examined the female leader Infront of her and felt like the air she gives was no longer the same.

She smiled and said, “Is it just me or did you mature?”

Philipia, “oh... uhm”

Principal plume chuckled and tuck a strand of her hair behind her ear, “Your bangs have grown, would you like to have it cut? I can recommend a good salon”

Philipia brush her bangs and shakes her head, she replied, “I can just tie it”

Ever since she was young, her mother had always lover her hair. Everyday, she would brush it and tie it beautifully. After her death, she had never cut her hair and only asked for a trimming from time to time.

Jack asked impatiently, “Are we done?”

Principal plume glared at the man and humped, pushing her chest out and back straight, “You may go, oh and also... I almost forgot”

Principal plume went around her desk and takes out a beautiful leather box with a golden and blue ribbon. She hands it to philipia and said, “From sir Tethys”

Philipia takes the box and examined the intricate design before taking the lid off. Inside was a white mask with two holes for the eyes.

Philipia, “This is...” wasn't this the mask she requested? It was only yesterday when she asked Tethys for it.

After thinking about it, she thought. ‘Oh, why am I even wondering? It's Tethys anyways’

Jack leaned close behind her and took the mask from the box, examining it from different angles.

Principal plume, “The mask is very special. It's sturdy and tough, it'll be hard for it to break. The materials used were grounded pearls”

Jack flinched and looked at her in disbelief, “What? This mask is made with pearls?” as though the mask was scorching hot, he immediately placed it back inside the box. No wonder the mask felt quite expensive!

Principal plume corrected, “Grounded pearls, they crushed the pearls and moulded it into a mask. Not only is it strong, it's also good for the skin. Your skin won't feel irritated after wearing a mask even for a whole week”

Jack asked, “But why? Niece, did you ask for this?”

She didn't deny, seeing as there's no reason to hide it, she nodded. Taking the mask from the the box, she placed it on top of her face.

Jack, “Why?”

Philipia, “Because... of reason”

She didn't want to say that she's still ashamed to face her friends after what happened. Wearing a mask would perhaps make her feel

safer.

She wasn't used to being vulnerable, she wasn't used to being weak and exposed. The thing she hates the most was the look of pity, it made her feel incompetent.

Jack can see the changes of her expression and didn't pry any longer.

After meeting with principal plume, they walked back to her dorm. Along the way, Jack was called in for a reason and promised philipia he'll be back and hands her his key and new password to his dorm.

Philipia didn't stay in the hospital for long but she felt like it had been ten years or so after coming back in her dorm building.

She got inside the elevator and arrived to her floor then went to her dorm.

Seeing the empty lounge, she casually went to her bedroom and began packing up the things she needed.

The room was fairly clean. She can still remember the exact positions her things were yet the things she left were disturbed. Someone was in her room.

Thinking about it, she did recall Japan carrying her out of the bathroom all soaked in blood, plus her arms were slit open by her. Even so, the floor was clean, her bathroom was clean. The lingering smell of chlorine was still there.

Did they clean her room? Or did the school sent someone to clean her room?

Nevermind, it does not matter. She won't be staying in this room anymore. Resuming her packing, her placed her books, bag and uniform in a moving box.

At that moment, she hears someone walking and stood still Infront of the door. Her back was facing it but judging from the footsteps, she can tell who it was.

Philipia greeted, “Malaysia, how are you?”

Malaysia was surprised at first but he steady himself and spoke, his voice almost trembling from shock and happiness. “P-philipia? You're back...”

Philipia didn't even look at him and continued packing, “Mn. I am, I'm happy to be back”

Malaysia took a step forward, “Did you just arrive today? How come you didn't inform us? We could've prepared a welcome home party”

Philipia, “It's okay. I didn't want to bother anyone and I also don't want a party either”

Malaysia swallowed hard, “Is that so? Well uhm... I'm really happy that you're back now. We were prohibited from visiting you so it's nice to see you again”

Philipia didn't reply anymore. Malaysia felt awkward but then he noticed her action. Because he was so ecstatic that he didn't realize that philipia was packing her things.

Malaysia, “Why are you... packing up? Are you leaving?”

Philipia, “Yeah, I'll be moving to my uncle's dorm first and wait for the new building to finish”

Then it came over Malaysia. While she was in the hospital, a new building was constructed. At first, he didn't think so much about it but now. Watching philipia packing her things, it doomed to him that he won't be able to see her often as he used to.

Malaysia, “P-philipia... I want to tell you something”

Philipia, “What is it?”

Malaysia took a deep breath, “I'm so-sorry! I'm sorry for getting angry at you... when you dove in the water before, it really wasn't in my business...”

Philipia answered, “It really didn't bother me but; apology accepted”

Malaysia beamed but then he met a vacant look from philipia. She stood right next to her bed staring at the moving box on top of it.

It had been many days, perhaps a week already since he last saw philipia. The last time he saw her was when she was still smiling brightly or when she was soaking wet from the freezing cold water.

Now that he saw her again. She may still spoke the same way but she's no longer the same. Malaysia couldn't help but feel heartbroken.

“I'd like to be alone for a while” philipia wasn't in the mood for a cliché reunion. Since filip returned her ‘common sense’. She had been thinking a lot of her actions from the past. From her oblivious replies to her naïve action.

It made her feel stupid and ashamed. Recalling her past self, she wants to bury herself in a hole.

Ahhhhhh! So embarrassing. It really was a good idea to ask Tethys for a mask to hide. Speaking of Tethys, when filip returned her common sense, she was still feeling giddy and normal, like something warm was just added and she can be honest about what she's feeling.

Now, it feels like she just went through her chuunbyu phase. The effect of returning the senses was so slow that she only realized it until now.

While philipia was having an inner turmoil. Malaysia felt like his heart was squeezed tight. Awkwardly, he chuckled nervously and said, “Alright. I won't bother you anymore. I'm sorry again”

Philipia nodded and watched Malaysia leave. She waited for a moment and heard the soft click of the front dorm room. Philipia squats down next to her bed while covering her face.

Was she too harsh? Though, weirdly enough. She doesn't really feel that guilty.

Adjusting her breathing, she stood up and resumed packing the last box.

Malaysia had left the dorm room. He leaned back against the door and sighed. He held his chest that was beating one rhythm at a time.

His philipia is still the same but also different, he doesn't know if he's ready to accept it or not.

“oh? Malaysia? What are you doing here?” Indonesia asked, walking towards Malaysia with Germany besides him.

Malaysia gave them a small smile and beckons them to their dorm. He said, “Philipia is back”

Both Indonesia and Germany halted and glance at each other before pushing Malaysia out of the way and barge inside the room.

“GODDESS! MY GODDESSS!!!!!!!!!”

“PHILIPIA! PHILIPIA!!!!! ACK! GERMANY DON'T PUSH YOU SON OF BI-- ACK!”

The room was quiet just a second ago when two loud voices started screaming in the hall.

Germany came in first, panting heavily. He was looking around the room until he spotted the female leader carrying a moving box, looking at him in surprise.

Germany's mouth opened but no words came out. He can only stare dumbfounded until he thought of the words he wanted to say.

As he was about to utter them. Indonesia pushed him out of the way and exclaimed, “Philipia! You're okay now!” he ran inside and hugged her tight, “I'm so happy that you're okay now! thank the heavens, oh my god... you're okay!”

Philipia can only stay still. She looked at Indonesia then Germany who's still standing by the door.

Philipia separates herself from the hug and took two steps back, “Hello Indonesia, hello germany. I'm back” she smiled and then added, “Sorry if I didn't inform anyone”

Indonesia shakes his head and replied, “oh no no no it's fine, it's okay. As long as you're okay now, it doesn't matter”

As he was about to give another hug, philipia took another step back, “uhm... pe-personal space”

Indonesia halted and processed what she said. He cleared his throat and stepped back, “sorry. You just got out of the hospital and...” he suddenly felt awkward, he never felt awkward with philipia when she's quite oblivious so he was confident in showing his feelings.

“Can uhmm... If it's okay, can I be alone?” she asked.

Indonesia glanced at Germany. Germany on the other hand was still spacing out as he stared at his goddess who seems to be different.

Philipia felt like her body was being stabbed, she turned to look away, feigning ignorance while secretly looking for her mask.

If only she wore it sooner then maybe she wouldn't feel this awkward. Seeing Germany's gaze, she felt exposed and vulnerable. She wasn't used to it yet.

Germany spoke first, “Indonesia, let's go. The goddess still has to rest”

Indonesia, “How about we help you?”

He was about to reach out for the other moving box but philipia stepped Infront and blocked him, “it's fine! Please, I'd like to be alone”

Hurriedly taking the two boxes, she grabbed her bag and walked out of the room in long strides.

Indonesia was about to chase after her but Germany stopped him, pulling him back by his shoulder. “Leave her be... can't you tell she's feeling uncomfortable?”

Indonesia, “uncomfortable? Well, not really...”

Germany sighed and shakes his head, “You have such weak faith my friend, how about considering joining my club?... ah! Wait, where are you going?”

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Philipia was almost running out of the dorm building before she stopped right Infront of the building of the teachers.

She sighs and looked behind if they followed after her. She murmured, “Why do they have to hug? Was hugging really that soft and comfortable before? Goodness me... I didn't even realize that” she fanned herself.

Recalling those times where she was hugged, trapped and kissed. Philipia's face starts to heat up and turn beat red. Gently slapping both sides, she did a breathing exercise to calm her beating heart.

Philipia properly carried the boxes and headed inside the dorm building.

Entering her uncle's room, she immediately saw the open door towards his bedroom. She soften her eyes and closed the door behind her with her feet.

She placed the box by the living room and headed towards the bedroom, her gaze staying on that particular spot.

Philipia can still feel that painful heat flowing through her body. The blood that would leak from her eyes and nose. It was so unbearable yet she can't seem to remember minding the pain.

She took another deep breath and closed the door.

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It was already evening when jack came back. He was called in for a meeting for all teachers that lasted until 5 pm.

Walking out of the conference room, Jack saw three annoying people walking towards him.

‘Takte...’ he cursed inwardly.

China greeted with a respectful bow, “Good afternoon sir, is it true philipia got discharged from the hospital?”

Spain and Japan behind both had an anticipated look on their faces.

Jack yawned, covering his mouth with the folder given to them at the meeting. He nodded and said, “Yeah. But, it'd be best if you leave her for a while”

China frowned but conceded, “Alright. But sir, may I ask? Is her scar...”

Jack, “It's not fully healed but it won't be a hindrance, although it will leave a scar since she refused to let her body heal it”

Spain muttered, “Consequence...”

Japan's hands formed to a fist that his knuckles were showing and veins bulging.

Jack nods, “Yeah... anyways, I still have things to do, philipia will be staying in my dorm until the new building is done”

When jack left, the three could only stay and watch as his figure disappeared. Japan exhaled heavily, staggering backwards and leaned back on the wall.

No matter how painful it is to wait to see her, he can endure it, as long as she's okay.

Although China wasn't looking at him, he can still feel his agitation, “You act as if she's dead”

Japan clicked his tongue and glared at him, “I'd like to see you how you'll be when you saw it”

Japan had been having nightmares ever since that night. He couldn't sleep, he couldn't eat. It was as if he didn't go through bloody wars and seen thousands of deaths.

The dreams he had were always vivid. Sometimes it was him drowning in red water, sometimes it was him diving down to save her. In the end, just within reach, he would always wake up and recall that bloody moment again and again.

Spain can only walk away.

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Philipia just started to make dinner just as Jack came back. Upon walking inside the room, he immediately inhaled the delicious scent that made him realize how hungry he really was.

Jack called, “Niece? Philipia?”

Philipia walks out of the kitchen holding a spatula, “Po? I mean... yes?”

Jack laughed and waves his hand, “Nothing, I just called. By the way, what's for dinner?”

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That night, philipia soaked in the bath with the white mask. Upon contact with the water, the mask became glossy and shiny.

She soaked even more of herself that only her nose and eyes as well as her hue blue hair that floats on the water is visible. She blew a few bubbles and placed the mask on the side.

After soaking in the bath. She wore a simple blue pajama and went to her uncle's bedroom.

Jack lend his room for her for the time being whilst he slept in the living room. Seeing her uncle fast asleep on the sofa, she went closer and tuck his blanket over him.

She whispered, “Good night Tito... ”

In the middle of the night, philipia woke up abruptly. She looked around the dimly lit room where only herself is in.

She sat up and went to the window, pushing aside the curtains. Looking up at the bright moon of autumn, philipia sighs.

Looking towards the bedside table where the mask rest, she stared at it for a moment before picking it up and stand before the full body mirror.

Placing the mask on her face. The mask was almost a perfect fit, it wasn't hard to breath into it either. In fact, it was breathable and comfortable.

Pulling the thin string over her head, she fixed it properly on her face until she was satisfied.

Standing Infront of the mirror is a woman with a bandage on both arms and petite stature and a mask.

Looking at herself, even philipia doesn't have a clue on what expression she is making. The mask was too empty, too hollow, too... Blank.

It was just a simple shape to cover her face with two holes for the eyes, yet her heterochromatic irises isn't even visible.

Philipia touched the mirror as though she was trying to look for someone through her.

Philipia felt like the oblivious and innocent her, didn't exist as though it was just a mirage, a shell to protect herself.

That old philipia is gone now... She almost misses her.

“It doesn't look bad”

A voice spoke in her head yet the unbearable pain wasn't there. Philipia wasn't shocked, maharlika had already told her that he'll be there with her whilst the others were still asleep.

Philipia chuckled, “I know, I was just trying it”

Maharlika grinned, “If you could put a few designs on it, it won't look intimidating”

“it's intimidating?” she pouts and removed the mask, examining it once more “I think it resembles a deadpan look”

“it looks like your mask has finally given up on life”

Philipia raised a brow, “That's why it doesn't look bad?”

Maharlika chuckled, “Yes, that's why it doesn't look bad silly girl”

Philipia giggled before she turn to the clock. She thought for a moment then wore the mask, jacket and shoes before heading out. Quietly tiptoeing through the living room and outside.

“Where are you going?”

Philipia replied as she breathes out cold breath. The autumn breeze bellowing through. “Go for a walk, I can't sleep, I just woke up abruptly”

“in 3 in the morning?”

Philipia halted and looked around the empty, quiet campus that almost looked like another world.

“yes, in 3 in the morning” she replied.

Philipia placed her hands in her pocket jacket and started walking in an unhurried way.

She hummed a song that was carried by the wind. Unknowingly, she walked for a while and ended up Infront of the warning sign of the pond that she used to go.

[No trespassing]

Philipia cocked her head to the right, attempting to rub her nose but ended up rubbing the flat surface of the mask.

“weird, I've always wanted to ask Tethys why he blocked this place” she said.

“seems to me, he wanted to keep something in here” maharlika guessed “wasn't this the place where you both fell?”

Philipia chuckled and stepped over the sign, pretending to have never read it, “He pulled me in because he was bored...” she murmured “also, it was freezing cold at that time”

As she said that, she arrived at the pond. The water calm and serene like a mirror that would break with a touch. Walking close to the edge, she squats down and dips her hand.

Philipia shivered and pulled her hand back, shaking the water off and bury it again in her pockets. “Freezing” she comments and blew on her hand with her warm breath.

“Winter is coming, soon it'll be spring too, then summer, then autumn again, then winter and so on until 2 years had gone by...” maharlika spoke, almost melancholic “You won't even realize it silly girl, you didn't even realized you've been here for 3 years now. And if those 2 years is over, you'll go back to your brother. You know what he'll do right?”

Philipia takes a small twig besides her feet and drew random things on the soil, sweeping away those orange and brown leaves. “I know... even so, it feels weird knowing your own brother likes you

not as a sister...”

When philipia asked Martial back in the hospital, she already had a deep understanding of it. Even so, even though she already understood and knew of his feelings after filip gave back her common sense, she still hoped he wouldn't. Holding on to that last straw that your own blood relative doesn't like you and it's all a misunderstanding. Philipia thought she was pathetic.

“You've realize it now? It was quite obvious, nobody kisses like that”

Philipia nodded and unconciously wet her lips, “But I'm curious, why would brother like me”

“Didn't you like your own uncle before as well?”

Philipia tilts her head to the side, a gesture of thinking. “It was just a crush, or something similar to admiration. I remembered I had a crush on uncle when I saw him win against papa on a match”

Maharlika chuckled, “A child's heart is always the pure one”

Philipia was about to reply when she heard rustling behind her, “sooooooooo, you're back”

Italy yawned and stretched his arms backwards, approaching the female leader who was squatting by the pond.

He grinned, “How are you?” he asked but then noticed the mask she was wearing. “What is that? Are you costplaying?”

Philipia simply stared at him with her two holes mask. Italy felt weirded out but he added, “nevermind, I don't really care. But anyways, I'm happy you've recovered well”

Philipia stood up, dusted her pajama then turned her heel to head back.

Italy, “What's wrong? Oh! By the way, can you tell you admirers to stop blaming me for your attempted suicide? Seriously it's annoying”

Philipia paused her steps but did not turn around.

Italy continued, “I get that they like you or whatever but, this is getting way out of hand. If your father was here I'm sure he'd reprimand you to stop adding a bunch of men in your harem”

Philipia, “Too bad he's not. And he wont. Ever”

Maharlika then began to feel her emotion rising. He whispered, afraid that Italy would hear him even though he won't. “Philipia, calm down okay?”

Italy's smile faded and his eyes darken. His casual attitude disappearing, replaced by a contempt look and heavy atmosphere.

Philipia didn't even need to look back to know what he's feeling. Just by standing to where she is, she can already feel his hate and resentment.

Italy sneered, “Oh? So you're aware? I wonder who's fault it was?”

“Whether it was my fault or not, it doesn't matter since papa is dead” philipia replied without even batting an eye. Of course, Italy couldn't see it and can only hear her unconcerned and flat tone.

Italy exclaimed, “How come it doesn't matter?! It DOES matter!”

Philipia glanced at the man who's eyes were filled with hate, she spoke, “And will it even matter? Will it bring papa back alive?! If it does you can hate me all you want!”

“You—!” he gritted his teeth and walked in long strides towards her way, grab her collar and pulled her up. He retorted through gritted teeth. “But it will justify his death! It will justify his sacrifice for a good for nothing daughter like you!”

Philipia didn't even fight back and let Italy vent. Thanks to the mask, she can't reveal a hurt and sad expression.

Italy continued, “Why did he have to die?! If he didn't then maybe she should've been here with me!”

Philipia finally held on to his wrist and stood on her toe, “I don't care if whoever she is that left you! all I care is that Papa's death will be justified, and it won't bring him peace if you keep bothering me! HIS daughter!”

Italy raised his fist and exclaimed, “Just because you think you're a woman doesn't mean I won't punch you?!” he then threw his fist but philipia caught it with her hands.

Philipia retorted, “and just because you think I'm a woman I won't block your punch?!”

She raised both her legs and pushed Italy off of her. Philipia fell back first but quickly gained her balance.

‘tsk! Why does he always pick on me?!’ she complained in her head while avoiding punched after punches from Italy, sometimes, even blocking and counter back.

But then, she accidentally stepped on a leaf and slipped backwards. Italy used this chance and jumped on her, trapped her on the ground and even used both knees to keep her arms down, causing her stitches to open, soaking her jacket and bandage crimson red.

But the pain didn't bother her, she kept struggling and even using her legs to break free. “I don't give a fuck if you're a woman or not! Just so you know! You wouldn't be able to find that damn island if it wasn't for me! I could've burned that place if I wanted to! But because it was made by blood and sweat from my friends, I kept my promise and lead you to that forsaken place!”

Philipia wrapped her legs around his waist and twist him down. They both rolled on the ground and philipia ended up on top. She locked him in place the same way he did, using her knees to keep his arms in place.

“It would've been better if you didn't!”

Italy screamed and struggled with all his might. One of his arms broke free and landed a punch on her but she quickly caught his fist on the second attempt.

“You ungrateful! ungrateful little wench! It's because of you! You! You! You killed them! it's all your fault! All your fault!”

Philipia bit her lower lip as she try to keep him down, but because her wound opened and lost a good amount of blood, her arms began to feel numb and weak.

Yet again, they rolled on the ground that a few leaves and soil stuck on their clothes. This time, Italy was on top, he held both her arms, purposely tightening his hold that the blood was now beginning to soak her entire jacket and seep through the fabric and to his hand.

“IF ONLY IT WAS YOU WHO DIED AND NOT HIM! NOT THEM!”

Philipia used all her might to break free, punch his pressure point, push him down and land a punch on his face once, twice, thrice...

Philipia was on top of him while landing one punch after another, not even giving the man underneath her a chance to fight back. And even if he did manage to punch her back, she would double hers.

Panting heavily, she grab his collar and made Italy face her. Her mask was now crooked to the side that show one fourth of her face, her lips, cheek and side of her eyes were visible.

“You said so yourself you vowed an oath to protect papa with your life! Then why weren't you there when he needed you?! Why was I, who came instead?! Why did you only came when he was already gone?!” she continued whilst punching him with one arm, a few of her blood splashing on the ground and on his face, “you kept blaming me! I was but a powerless girl! I was there yet I couldn't do anything! Yet you! YOU! You had strength! You vowed! Yet you weren't present! You weren't there! You were nowhere!”

By the end of her words, she drop him another heavy punch, all of her strength on it.

“Do not blame me for your incompetence! The fact that you're blaming me for your fault, your mistake! Your uselessness! will not justify his death! It will not remove the guilt in your heart! It won't make you feel good! It'll only make you look like a pathetic and

weak man!”

At the end, they were both panting and catching for their breath. Italy's face was now filled with cuts and bruises, a few purple colour on his cheek and cuts on his lips and chin.

He lay there motionless as her words echoed in his head. Suddenly, a drop of something wet landed on his cheek and slid down.

He first thought it was rain, but then, he looked up to philipia who's mask was now crooked. The hole of her mask was seeping salty tears.

Philipia leaned down again and sobbed. “You have no one to blame but yourself... between the both us, it is you who knows it best. You're just scared to get hurt” she said between her loud sobbing, her voice hitching whilst large beads size tears escape. “it is not me who should wake up to reality... it is you Italy, it is you.”

Philipia stood up held her bloodied arms and staggered as she walked back to the dorm.

Italy stayed in place, his body spread out on the ground as he stated at the early dawn sky.

Philipia quietly left and quietly came back but she didn't tip toe towards the bathroom. She walked there unsteady before supporting her body by the counter.

Fortunately, Jack was a heavy sleeper. Despite the loud noises in the bathroom and the clattering of bottles of pills. He slept soundly.

Maharlika sighed, “Lock the door, stay still and let me switch”

Philipia just lost a lot of blood so she wasn't in the right state of mind. She simply nodded and let herself supported on the counter sink before her mind blank out and her vision fades.

As she slept, she dreamt. She dreamt she was sitting on the ground and before her was the body of her father.

Kati lay motionless before the young philipia with a vacant

expression. There was no ripple in her eyes as she stared at the corpse.

A visible hole on his forehead and his back is now soaked in his own blood.

The young philipia leaned close and brush his hair back, “Papa... why did you have to sleep early? Why couldn't you wait for me?”

“Papa, you brought in a troublesome man too. He's hard to talk to without uttering the words that it was me”

“Papa, don't blame me. It wasn't my fault”

“papa? Had I been bad?”

Then, a woman came out of the burning forest and stood Infront of the two. She wore a black veil. Her face obscured by the fabric yet philipia can see a slight silhouette of her face.

She looked up before looking back down on the corpse. She added: “Don't worry papa, I'll avenge you. But I'll do it in the right way. So wait for me, okay?”

Wait for me...

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End of chapter 17 : agathokakological

Coming Chapter 18 : Acatalepsy

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Author has something to say...

I'm so sorry it's late!!! >< I just got home earlier! I didn't have WiFi when I was on my way home QAQ

Also, no facts for today. Sorry QwQ

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RmlubGFuZA==

Chapter 18 : Acatalepsy

When philipia woke up, she was on the bed with her arm now fully wrapped with a new bandage.

She examined it for a moment before she sat up in a daze.

Maharlika spoke, “I've wrapped it with a new bandage, unfortunately the stitches snapped so I had to remove them”

Philipia didn't reply. Even so, maharlika continued.

“Today, you were reckless, you could've just walked away. Silly girl, do you want to go back to the hospital? Your grades will drop if you continue to be like this, do you want that?”

Maharliaka's voice was soft and gentle, like the wind during spring. Even though he was scolding her, it sounded as though he was trying to coax her instead.

Philipia sighed and took a deep breath before she got off the bed. “thanks... Though, a low grade really doesn't bother me...”

Philipia can be considered average. She was never a genius nor good at studying. But because of martial, she had to work hard and store information in her head even if she has to force it. If the war didn't come to her country, philipia could've had average grades.

She never really wanted to be on first or second place. In fact, the ones who has good memorization skills to the point it's almost photogenic is Greg and Martial. The only reason why she can memorize fast is because of martial's harsh training.

Before, she memorize 120 pages in 1 minute. Those 120 pages contain 300 poems and 3 thousand words. Whilst Greg and Martial can memorize anything for 2 seconds.

Philipia almost wanted to give up but she couldn't give up. Thus, she worked hard day in and day out.

Now, she can memorize anything for a few second; but if she deem it useless, she can throw it away and permanently forget it the next day.

Jack was awoken by the smell of breakfast and couldn't help but open his eyes and walk towards the dining table like a zombie with a lack of limbs.

He stared at the delicious set of breakfast. Chorizo, egg, fried rice with tomato and diced meatloaf, thick egg soup and a steaming hot coffee.

Philipia came out of the kitchen carrying a pan. She wore the autumn uniform that was now changed, an apron with the words ‘best uncle ever’. She tilts the pan a little and let the hotdogs roll towards the plate.

Jack felt his mouth water, “Uhhh... g-good morning”

Philipia greeted back. Although she smiled, jack couldn't see it due to the mask. “good morning”

Even though she has a small cut on her lip and a small bruise on her cheekbone due to Italy's punches. The mask however was unscate and still remained sturdy and smooth.

She thought. ‘This mask is not only convenient but also a protection’

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Jack and philipia walked to school together, although Jack had to head to his office and philipia went to her classroom.

Along the way, she receive many gazes and look of curiosity.

Luckily, philipia didn't feel too awkward because of the mask.

“MAPLE SYRUP!!!!!” a loud roaring voice called her from behind. Philipia flinched and looked back but was immediately greeted by a tight hug that seems to squeeze the life out of her.

Canada cried, “MAPLE SYRUP! YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I MISSED YOU AND HOW MUCH I WANTED TO VISIT YOU!!!!!”

Philipia couldn't really understand when she was busy fighting for her life. “c-c-canada! A-ai-a-aiii-aiirrr!!”

Canada was so ecstatic that he didn't hear her plead and continued crying and complaining how he really wanted to see her. His hug tighten even more.

At this rate, she might as well die of suffocation!

But just before her life was nearing, France came and pulled Canada out of her embrace. Philipia gasp for air and coughed while holding on to her arm. She felt like the wound opened up a little.

‘why is everyone hugging?!’ she screamed in her head.

France and Canada were both shook from her reaction.

France stuttered as he asked, nervous to even touch her, “P-philipia! Are you okay? Are you hurt somewhere?! See Canada?! See what you did?! Why didn't you listen to me you idiot!”

Canada trembled in fear, “S-sorry! I didn't mean it, maple syrup, let's go to the clinic!”

Philipia shakes her head and gesture a stop sign as she catch for her breath. Both Canada and France simultaneously shut their mouth.

Because Canada was too excited and France was too worried. They only realized now that philipia was wearing a mask.

Philipia, “It's fine. I'm okay, just don't hug people out of nowhere next time canada” or she might die of suffocation and embarrassment.

Canada was surprised. Never once did his maple syrup complained or even say something to rebuke his habit of hugging her. Even so, he said, “O-okay, I'm sorry again. It's just, I was so happy to see you”

Philipia, “I know. I'm happy to see you too”

France then furrowed his eyebrows and hit the back of Canada's head.

Canada cried in pain, “OW! hey! What's that for?!”

France crossed his arms, “For being reckless, you knew she just got out of the hospital and...” he gesture his arms “It is still healing”

Canada immediately understood and felt even more sorry. “maple syrup let me check your arm, I m-might've opened up your stitches”

Philipia jerked back and held her arm. Because of the mask, they couldn't see her panic expression. Though she said in her usual gentle tone, “It's okay. It didn't open it just sting”

Canada, “What? But!”

France saw her subtle action but didn't pay too much on it in respect of her decision. He cleared his throat and grab the back of Canada's collar, “I see. We'll go back to our classroom first, I'll see you around philipia, congrats on your discharge”

Canada was about to say something when France covered his mouth and drag him back. Like a kidnapper who caught his victim.

Philipia waved at them and turn to her heel. Her footsteps light but hurried. When she spots her classroom, she stood still for a moment and watched as a few of her classmates go in and out.

She didn't stay in the hospital for so long yet why does it feel like she had been gone for like ten years? Even when she arrived here yesterday, it felt like she saw the school after so many years.

Philipia shakes her head and thought that it was just her and her anxiety. Gathering up her courage, she took one step at a time

before she pushed the half open door.

Japan and America were already there, so when the door opened, they immediately sensed her presence and couldn't help but have a look of surprise on their faces, this include her classmates that were just minding their own business and talking in their own world.

Maharlika, inside her head, wondered “Is wearing a mask a big deal? Or is it a violation? Wait— that guy is wearing a Viking helmet yet why isn't anybody talking about it?”

Philipia can only sigh inwardly for the voice in her head as she walk to her desk right at the front and Infront of America's.

America stood up, placed his chair besides hers and smiled. He placed his sunglasses on top of his head and beamed, “Philipia, you're back. Congrats on your discharge. How are you by the way?”

Philipia, “I'm okay, thanks”

America kept it short but he stayed in that position, his eyes on the female leader who placed their bag behind her and take out her notebook and pen and textbook for today's first class.

Japan on the other hand sat in a daze. He watched as philipia and America converse, though he can't see her expression.

He also wanted to go there and talk to her. Laugh and joke around like they always does, tease her and even play a little prank. Yet now, seeing philipia again, it felt like he's looking at an entirely different person.

He had felt this feeling before, this presence. It was the same as back then.

Could it be that philipia...

Japan couldn't help but ponder yet he couldn't ask about it so he remained silent, but from time to time he would steal a glance from the female leader.

Not long after, China and Spain arrived. They both looked at

philipia who was leaned back leisurely on her chair while reading a book.

Spain took a seat while China approached her “I heard of what happened this morning, about you and italy” he deliberately lowered his voice but it was enough for America and Japan and spain who was near at them, to hear.

What happened this morning with her and Italy?

They all wondered but they dare not ask.

The hand that was turning the page paused for a second but continued.

China couldn't see her expression but he saw the small pause, he sighed and pulled her right arm. He asked with a concerned tone “Does it still hurt?”

Philipia pulled her hand back and shakes her head, “It does not. I apologize for earlier, me and Italy had a bit of an argument”

China, “I see. But if Italy causes you trouble again you can talk to the student council about it, we'll deal with him”

Philipia smiled, “It's fine. But thanks anyways, I'll keep it in mind, thank you china”.

China pursed his lips and said nothing more before he walk to his seat.

Before, the five of them would often talk as soon as morning came. They would form in a circle and talk about almost anything. Yet now, all five of them were busy doing something on their own, remaining quiet and behave.

The professors in the academy were already informed in advance about philipia and of what happened to her. They were all given instructions not to ask or remind her of it when she attends back in class to respect a leaders privacy.

Of course, those instructions don't apply to professor Reich nor to

professor USSR. Even if they were a teacher, they are still a leader who is a senior.

Once third Reich's class started, he scanned his eyes around before it stayed on philipia. He smiled as he walks inside.

Reich, “Welcome back miss philipia”

Philipia stood up and bowed, “Thank you sir”

Reich chuckled, “I was worried about what happened, forgive me if I couldn't send a gift or even visit you”

Philipia was about to reply when China abruptly stood up and said in a stern voice, “Not to be rude sir, but I am sure the teachers were given instructions about her condition”

Reich simply laughed and leaned back on the teacher's desk, “I was only asking, and I was concerned for her as her teacher”

China narrowed his eyes, “Even so sir... a leaders privacy is still a leaders privacy”

Philipia sighed and shakes her head towards China, gesturing him that it's fine and she's okay. She faced her Reich again and said, “If sir is concerned, then I can reassure you that I'm okay”

Reich, “Alright, I apologize if I was somewhat rude”

Philipia sat down and Reich started his lesson.

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The whole day, nobody spoke to philipia, afraid they'll agitate her and worsen her condition. Even if they really wanted to, they could only step back and watch her from behind.

Of course, some of them couldn't hold themselves back but philipia replied to all of their concerns and questions.

Finland and Estonia were walking down the hall when Finland spotted her and waved at her, “Sunflower!!!” he called.

Estonia jolted then turn his head around to know which direction she is, “Sweetheart?! Where!? Where??!?!!”

Philipia was walking inside the hall with Poland and Sweden. When they heard someone call, The three of them looked back at the same time.

Sweden waved back, “ayeeeeeee, Finsea! Estate!”

Despite being blind, Estonia was the fastest when he ran, but because his vision is dark, he hugged Poland whilst philipia unconsciously stepped to the side.

‘another hug again’ she thought.

Finland corrected while holding Estonia's walking stick, “It's Finland and Estonia. What Finsea and estate?”

Sweden laughed, “That's what Russia calls you”

Finland rolled his eyes but he smiled when he saw philipia, “Sunflower, how are you? Are you feeling okay now?”

This question was asked for the hundredth time yet philipia replied every time patiently.

“I'm feeling okay”

Finland missed her voice but he also missed her face. Yet the sunflower before him was wearing a mask with only two holes.

“eh? Sweetheart? This isn't sweetheart?” Estonia pats the body he was hugging. His hands pats the side of both arms before patting the chest that was flat as a board.

Poland struggled and push him away, “Get offfff!” he exclaimed and covered his chest as if he was a woman who was Just molested.

Sweden laughed and pats Estonia's back.

Estonia chuckled, “Oh! Sorry! Where's sweetheart? Sweetheart?”

Philipia sighed and reached for his hand which Estonia gently grasp, “sweetheart! You're back! I'm so happy!”

Philipia, “I know.”

Estonia jumps excitedly before giving philipia a gentle hug, aware that she's still recuperating and her wound is still healing.

Maharlika inside her head then said, “At least the hug this time is gentle”

Philipia can feel her cheeks heat up and her heart accelerating. She couldn't help but push him softly and said, “I-I'm fine, no need to hug”

Finland, “Sunflower, have you eaten yet? Or perhaps a medicine you need to take? also, you don't have to go to the club either, it's autumn and the sunflowers were all transferred to the greenhouse”

Philipia nodded in reply.

Estonia puffed his cheeks, “Sweetheart! please don't do what you did before okay? I don't know why I couldn't feel it but I was so scared! I was so scared when I thought I could lose you!”

Philipia sighed and patted his head, comforting the leader who's on the verge of crying, “Sorry, I won't do it again”

Estonia sniffled. He took her hand patting his head and press it on his cheek, “It's fine, what matters is sweetheart is now okay”

Philipia stared at his cloudy eyes. Unconsciously, she brought her other hand and gently caress his eyelids. Estonia giggled in response.

Sweden laughed and leaned himself back on the wall, “It's nice to have you back ladybug, the school had been enshrouded by gloom these days”

Philipia lifted the corner of her lips. Unfortunately nobody could see it.

“I'm not the only female leader” she said.

Poland replied, “well, they're not philipia. And there's only one philipia for us”

Philipia faced Poland who was smiling brightly. It felt like she was seeing them all for the first time. It felt like that shadow in her eyes was removed.

And for the first time, she can finally understand them.

When the school bell rang, they all simultaneously looked up.

Finland then pulled Estonia and shove his walking stick to him “Anyways, we'll see ya around sunflower”

Estonia, “Ah! Ah! W-wait! Why are you pulling? Hey!— sweetheart! See you around! Eat and rest okay???? Ow! Hey! My neck!”

Sweden laughed watching the two figure disappear at the corner of the hall before he beckons Poland.

Poland pouts and held both of philipia's hand, “Don't over exert yourself” he said and they both walk away.

Philipia nodded and watch them walk the opposite side of the hall. She stayed for a while before retiring back to her classroom.

As she walks down the hall, north suddenly came out of the corner. He stops Infront of her, staring at her. Philipia pursed her lips feeling a sense of déjà vu.

And as she expected, north gently takes her hand and pull her somewhere secluded. Philipia didn't speak, she just conceded and followed after the man before he stop and faced her.

“Is there something you need north?” she asked. Philipia felt nervous, hiding her hands under her sleeve as she clenched it tight.

North didn't answer and simply walk towards her, place his head on the crooked of her neck and wrap his hands around her waist.

Philipia trembled. Not because she was scared but because she was flustered. If it wasn't for the mask, north would've seen her flushed face.

“Let me stay like this... just for a moment” he said in a low, husky voice like a magnet that attracts her.

Philipia was itching to rub her ears. But she stayed rigid and stiff wrapped around his embrace.

North asked, “Does it still hurt?”

Philipia, “No... it does not”

North, “Good...”

And that was it. They hugged for about 5 minutes before philipia felt like her body went numb. As north separate himself from her, he kissed the lip area of the mask and smiled, “see ya”

North walked away and left the dumbfounded and blushing philipia. She calmed herself down as much as she could before she walked back to her classroom with jelly legs.

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Meanwhile on the other side of the city, Tethys stood at the 66th floor of a building where he currently resides.

Twirling a glass of wine on his left while the other is holding a phone. On the screen, it showed a picture of a woman wearing an empty two holed mask, staring at the withered autumn tree, carrying itself a sense of melancholy.

His lips arched into a smile, one that is rare yet creepy, considering the current circumstances.

Behind Tethys is Laurasia, laying on the floor wearing an almost burnt out dress, her hair in disarray and her skin were filled with electric like burned marks, around her wrist was the most damaged and charcoaled.

"She's still alive?" He asked without even looking, eyes fixated on his phone, swiping left and right with the same woman (philipia) yet in all sort of different angle.

Obviously the pictures were all taken in secret yet professionally.

"Replying to sir, yes, she's still alive" one of his men in a black suit replied while kneeling and one hand on his chest.

"What a pity she still didn't die" he said as if he's merely talking about the weather "so? Did you find out why she gauged out philia's eyes?"

"Replying to sir, the reason she attempted to gauged out country leader philipia's eyes is to revive the honeycomb project"

Honeycomb project was a secret and only a few leaders have known about it. Honeycomb was created by his father where they edit the gene of a person to give them a poor imitation of Armageddon's yellow eyes. Very few leaders know about this.

Tethys wasn't surprised, in fact, he just wanted to make sure.

"Well, well, what do you say sister gondwanda?" Tethys turn his gaze to gondwanda sitting on a leather royal chair, worriedly glancing at Laurasia who almost looked dead.

"Tethys, Laurasia is wrong! Laurasia didn't mean it!" She defend. Even with an IQ that's higher than average, she still spoke like a little kid.

Tethys was originally creeped out of his two sisters, he does punish them time to time but not to this extreme. It's just they touched his most beloved person that he finally snapped and did what he wanted to do long ago.

"Didn't mean it? Gauging someone's eye?" Tethys replied with a

lighter tone but everyone in the room trembled, this strong aura is undoubtedly signifying that gondwanda's words provoked him. What's even more terrifying was Tethys smiling, one that everyone usually see whenever he talked about this female leader philipia!

"Gondwanda is sorry! Khaak!.... Don't choke! Knhnkkk!!!" Gondwanda felt a heavy pressure around her neck. This mighty aura is definitely worthy for a continent leader, an aura that can oppress people and force them to obey.

Like a true born alpha.

Perhaps they've stayed for too long in the private asylum where everyone obeys them that they forgot their own position. They're even inferior to country leaders, what's more if it's a continent leader? All they have is a high IQ. their real purpose is to obey their father and brother to complete the machine, after that, they're deemed worthless.

Was that perhaps why Laurasia wanted to continue honeycomb? Is it because they're a failure?

Gondwanda thought of this and couldn't help but cry out, not because of the pressure around her neck but because of her inferiority. Even if there's a pure blood of continent leader running in their veins, the birthmark is still faded to the point it's invisible.

Tethys took a deep breath and sighed heavily, pouring the glass of wine on to the unconcious Laurasia and throwing the glass towards gondwanda that it shattered right in front of her.

"Pick these two, take Gondwanda to the family hospital and Laurasia back to the private asylum, they've already had their fun, times up.

His men all wearing black suit, stood up as if the heavy oppression just now was nothing. It's not as if they couldn't feel it, but because they're always near their leader that they're used to it now.

One of them picked up Laurasia and placed her over his shoulder whilst the others carried the weak gondwanda.

"Wait"

They all stop and turn to him.

"Sister gondwanda, at that time at the museum, philia was obviously hiding something, and it's when she saw the writings on one of Armageddon's things, why is it?" He asked, turning his gaze to look at her straight in the eyes.

Gondwanda could feel the hair on her back stand and couldn't help but breakdown completely. Alas, the mind of someone who's brain capacity is full is surely to break from an overwhelming intelligence.

She laughed as if she's mocking him and repeated the words 'tick-tock' again and again before the men finally dragged her out of the room.

Even now, the sound of her cackling laughter still echoed down the hall.

It didn't bother Tethys. If it's a game of chess, he's surely to win, whatever philia is hiding from him he's sure to know.

Unable to know every single one of her is the same as not possessing her. She never really belonged to him, so all he has to do is to make him belong to her.

He walked around the desk in the room and sat down on his chair. He glanced at the flower on the table and sneered "honeycomb, honeycomb, honeycomb..." He muttered.

Honeycomb, neither sweet as it is in reality.

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Philipia suddenly shuddered and couldn't help but rub her nape. When the class ended, she snapped back and gathered her belongings.

Philipia had long realize about their attachment to her. At first, it didn't really bother her much and she enjoyed it (for some reason) before. But now that filip gave back her ‘common sense’ she realized once more how annoying it was.

She really didn't mind but whenever she meets one of them, their questions were all the same that she felt like a robot who was answering one or two questions from different people.

Hurriedly walking back to the dorm, philipia almost wanted to rejoice and celebrate but then she saw familiar faces by the entrance.

She sighed inwardly. Maharlika couldn't help himself to laugh.

Earlier, he was slumbering when philipia encountered north and wasn't aware of what his silly girl just went through.

Philipia didn't plan to talk about it either when she felt like exploding from shame when she thinks about it.

By the entrance of the teachers dorm stood 7 leaders. Egypt, Ireland, Nepal, Germany, Poland, France, Greece.

Egypt was the first to see her, “Anuket! Is that you? Why are you wearing a mask? Is there a performance?”

Ireland looked at Egypt confusingly, “are you seriously asking that? Please don't tell me you're really that dumb?”

Egypt looked back and asked with a innocent look, “What? What do you mean?”

Greece then walks up to her, scrutinized the female leader from head to toe before shoving a bag of cookies, “Here, snacks.”

Philipia can tell he was angry and pissed, (surprisingly) and couldn't help but laugh in her head. She hold the bag of cookies and

thanked him.

Greece rolled his eyes, “It's just a bother, people who self harm themselves pisses me off”

Philipia replied, “I see. Anyways, what are you guys doing here?”

Germany was the first to answer, “Goddess! We would like to discuss you about something”

Philipia understood and said, “Let's go somewhere else”

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The group went out of school and went to a restaurant with a private room. They ordered their food before discussing.

Nepal, who was usually quiet, spoke first “We wanted to ask about ‘that’ place. We talked about this when you were still in the hospital and came to a decision that we should move those things”

Philipia played with a straw, folding it and weaving until she created a knot, “That's a good idea. But I also wanted to discuss something else”

France placed his hand on the table, “Go on”

“I asked my brother to let me stop spying. In exchange, I can stay here for two years before going back and never set foot outside again”

Poland stood up abruptly, “What?! Why?”

Philipia raised her hand and gesture him to sit down, “I said it for a reason, let me finish. I asked my brother to let me finish 2 years I have left in the academy and in exchange, I'll stay by his side. But, while I'm staying for two years, I won't be idle. You mentioned ‘that’ place and I've already thought of a plan”

Philipia took a sip of water by lifting the bottom of the mask. Nepal and Egypt sitting on both sides of her peeked a little.

She continued, “I'm planning on destroying that place...”

They all had the same reaction. None of them anticipated that philipia would choose to destroy that whole place that was created from blood and sweat of her father and his members.

Philipia also began to tell them about the remaining member, Italy. And what he said and the reason why she harmed herself.

Greece scoffed, “Pathetic, he actually blamed you for someone's death? Is he mentally retarded?”

Nepal also added, “His reason is unreasonable but you can understand why he did so”

Egypt shakes his head, “In my country, we simply execute those types of people”

Greece rolled his eyes, “in your country, but you're not in your country”

Egypt, “I simply shared my tradition”

Greece, “You might as well join the marketing department or perhaps a tourist”

Philipia clears her throat and the two immediately quiets down. She leaned back on her chair and said, “The reason why I wanted to destroy it is because of brother. I'm not confident we can even move them, better yet, hide them.”

Egypt anxiously asked as though his favourite food was about to be eaten, “What about the gold? The diamonds? The stones?”

Philipia didn't even hesitate, “Destroy it”

Germany, “Goddess, if I may. Why not use those treasure as insurance? Who knows what we will encounter. Even those weapons and guns. They might come in useful”

France, “We can have those weapons that can be smuggled out secretly, but those tanks? I'm not sure how your father and his

group was able to do it but those tanks are hard to move”

They all began to discuss while philipia remained quiet. She placed the beautiful knot of the straw on the table and drank her water.

Poland's attention however was on the female leader who sat quietly on her chair. With the mask on, he can't tell what kind of expression she's making, the curiosity itching his mind.

Almost half the day. They all got to a conclusion that barely passed logic. In the end, they cut the promise off when philipia wanted to let Greg and her uncle know about the place.

They all returned to the academy when the sky gradually turned orange to dark. Philipia got out of the elevator and entered the dorm room and saw jack already preparing today's dinner.

He wore the apron ‘best uncle ever’

“You're back, where were you?” he casually asked before going back to the kitchen.

Philipia stayed there for a moment before she entered. She placed her bag on the sofa then walk towards the table.

“adobo?”

Jack came out with a huge bowl of rice, “Yeah, that's the only food I'm proud of”

Philipia didn't mind before she lifted the corner of the mask and tasted the food. The taste then melted in her tongue. The subtle spiciness and sour taste were integrating on another that brought about a burst of flavor.

The adobo reminded her of Perla. Of course, perla's adobo was so much better. Philipia was simply biased.

Jack waited and anticipated his niece's reaction. “How is it?”

Philipia smiled, “It's good. I'll change my clothes first then I'll eat”

Jack laughed and felt pleased, “Alright! I'm still cooking something else, I'll call you when it's ready”

Philipia entered the room and changes into something more comfortable. As she was changing her bandage. She caught a glimpse of a bag that contain Kati's secret messages and clues as well as the boxes and keys.

Contemplating for a second, she takes the bag and left the room. “Tito, I'll be going out for a while, I'll be back soon”

Before jack could even reply, philipia already left.

Philipia ran to the lake where she once rescued Estonia from drowning. She placed the bag down and unzip it, taking out all the contents inside.

As she breathes, a thin smoke would escape her lips. The breeze of autumn were starting to get colder and colder by the day.

Philipia looked back at the tranquil lake that was almost covered by maple leaves, she took one and it made a soft ripple on the surface.

She examined the leaf before she placed it on one of the boxes as well as the worn out papers with coordinates of the three places she visited.

She placed the key, the Polaroid, the picture of the woman with a veil, the group picture and lastly, Kati's letter.

Philipia stared at the letter and run her hands on the paper. She can imagine her father writing the letter unhurriedly. The calm feeling she gets when she reads it makes her feel like her father felt the same.

‘papa, how can you be so calm as to write a letter?’

As she thought of that, she chuckled before she placed it on the box, close it and fasten it with a belt. She then takes out a rope and wrap a huge rock to it.

As she stood up, she looked down on her reflection before she used

her feet to push the box slowly towards the edge until it made a soft splash.

Bubbles started to pop as the box slowly submerge all the way to the bottom of the lake.

Sighing, philipia finally felt like a burden was removed.

“If you were gonna throw it, you could've just gave it to me”

Philipia didn't even need to look back to know who the person was.

Italy squats down and threw the other boxes after filing it with rocks. “These boxes were craved by lihim”

Philipia, “Is she that person? Your fated pair?”

Italy nodded, “Yeah. She was”

Philipia squats down besides him. She took a small twig and began writing randomly on the ground. “was? She's dead?”

He shrugged, “Perhaps. All I know is she left and I never heard from her again”

Italy recalled the day when she left without a word. The feeling he felt on that night was still so vivid that he felt like suffocating.

Philipia, “She hated you?”

Italy, “I don't know... but she wasn't close to me even if we were both aware we were fated pair”

Philipia watched Italy fill the remaining boxes with rocks and leaves before he push them all down to the water.

Philipia commented, “Maybe it's because she chose not to follow her fate and chose to make her own fate”

These words took Italy aback. He slowly glanced at the female leader who's expression were obscure by the mask. His body began to tremble as those words resonated in his head.

On a bright sunny day. A woman obscured by a black veil stood on a cliff. She turn her head to the man besides her who has a pleading expression.

She spoke, “I chose to make my own fate. Not follow it”

Italy's hand subconsciously place itself on her mask. Philipia was surprised and was about to remove his hand when he tighten his hold and said, “You... ”

Philipia stayed still. Italy's hand was big and it was big enough to cover the whole mask. His fingers were even obscuring a little of the hole.

Italy stammered, “H-how...?”

Philipia, “how what?”

Italy's lips trembled. He took a deep breath before standing up, “nevermind... anyways, you can destroy that forsaken place or not for all I care. But if you ever needed help, you...” he sighed, “You can come to me. Since Kati is gone, I'll pledge my loyalty to you instead”

His words shook philipia. It wasn't long when they were arguing and even beating each other up. Why is he pledging his loyalty out of the blue now?

Philipia was both terrified and shock. It was the same feeling when your phone fell in the water and forgot to delete a message you sent to the wrong person.

Italy couldn't see her expression so he continued, thinking that his words weren't proof enough. “get it? I'm pledging myself, you better be happy about”

Philipia finally snaps back and nodded almost in a daze as she watched Italy walking back.

She removed her mask and examined it, wondering what made Italy react that way. In the end, she pondered for a long time and couldn't understand. Maybe her common sense hasn't really return

yet. At least she wasn't so dumb anymore.

Philipia went back and ate dinner with her uncle before washing up and going to bed. As she leaned on the window, she unwrapped her bandage and examined her wound that is still red and throbbing.

Maharlika watched as she run her fingertips on her wound with such focus as though she was looking at an exhibit from a museum. Curiously, he asked, “Philipia, why do you look at it like that?”

Philipia replied blankly, “Ever since I was a kid. I never had scars. At first, I thought it was just me and my healthy body. Of course, nobody wanted scars. But as I grew, I came to understand that a scar represent something in your life. That small blemish on your skin carries a million words and a story. It makes me feel alive and not... artificial. Being a female leader is but a blessing in disguise”

Maharlika pondered her words and thought that it was reasonable. He has nothing to argue with it. But then he thought. ‘doesn't most women like unblemished skin?’

His silly girl is really weird.

Philipia didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She said, “You do know I can still hear you?”

Maharlika chuckled, “I nearly forgot we have one mind”

Philipia stood up and opened the window, the autumn breeze charging in that blows the curtain. Her hue blue hair tremble against the wind. She replied, almost like a whisper, “You also have a mind of your own maharlika... you are your own person...”

Maharlika smiled and couldn't help but take control half of her body and pat her head. “Silly girl” he said.

Philipia was patting her own head but the gesture felt the same when she was in her mind and when maharlika patted her. She couldn't help but laugh. Her laughter echoed in the silent autumn night.

Just then, there was a cooing and a certain bird flew around the

building before landing on a slender arm that stretches out of a window.

Philia beamed. For so many days, or already a week. The female leader finally smiled. The bright moon shines upon her as though it kisses her cheeks.

“Athena! How are you? did you get chubby the last time I saw you?” she said sweetly like that of a child.

Athena cooed and hands her a letter from her beak. She then rubs her head on her cheek and rested on her shoulder, wanting to read the letter.

Philipia, “Is this from Greece?”

Maharlika also peeked in.

Philipia turns the letter.

[To: philipia]

[From: Laos]

Surprised, she gently pry the letter open and read it. The handwriting was in cursive as though it was written by a legendary magician.

Laos wrote:

When I too long have looked upon your face,
Wherein for me a brightness unobscured
Save by the mists of brightness has its place,
And terrible beauty not to be endured,
I turn away reluctant from your light,
And stand irresolute, a mind undone,
A silly, dazzled thing deprived of sight
From having looked too long upon the sun.
Then is my daily life a narrow room
In which a little while, uncertainly,

Surrounded by impenetrable gloom,

Among familiar things grown strange to me
Making my way, I pause, and feel, and hark,
Till I become accustomed to the dark...

Philipia smiled and lean the letter close to her face, inhaling the faint scent of roses and orange.

On the students dorm building. Laos stood on the rooftop with a binocular in hand. He adjusted the lense and zoomed in on the window where philipia is. He smiled and put his binoculars down.

He then whistled sharply.

Athena and philipia both heard the whistle.

Athena cooed first, feeling reluctant to part with the female leader who was nice and often gives her treats! Unlike her own master who kept saying ‘Eat less and go on a diet’. She much prefer Laos and philipia who spoils her.

Philipia giggled and takes an owl treat from her her bag and gave her one bag of it.

Athena was pleased!

“Go on now. Tell him thank you”

Athena cooed and flew like a leaf from her arm. She circled around the massive building before flying straight to Laos who's arms who's already ready for landing.

She landed softly and cooed twice.

Laos seemed to have understood and rubs her head, “Your welcome” he said and walked back to the building.

Philipia then closed the window before going back to her bed.

“good night maharlika...”

Maharlika smiled and softly replied, “Good night, silly girl”

_____

End of chapter 18 : Acatalepsy

Coming Chapter 19 : Hyperventilate

_____

Author has something to say...

Mask: Why is everyone so afraid of me?

_____

RXN0b25pYQ==

Chapter 19 : Hyperventilate

Chapter 19 : Hyperventilate.

Red maple leaves falls in the courtyard, falling everywhere on the ground, on the green tree that was yet to wilt, blending together at first glance. The leaves were blown around the yard leisurely by the wind.

Dusk fell like a curtain, and on the eaves the autumn sun was as cold as water.

Philipia was seated at the middle of the room in her classroom. With the mask that obscured her face. The teacher did not notice her attention and gaze, watching the red maple leaves falling like feathers, swaying left and right as it hit the ground.

“Tonight, there will be the autumn lantern festival, make sure to bring necessary materials for your lanterns...” the teacher said and everyone began to murmur to their seatmate.

Philipia never experienced lighting up a lantern, or even making one at that. The festivals in Pangaea we're almost similar to Asian culture but with a tinge mix of European and Western.

It had been a few weeks after her discharge, almost everyone forgot about her self harming incident. Japan had also began to speak normally with her and their relationship returned to the way it was.

Though, philipia wasn't as oblivious and dense as before but, she was much easier to talk to now. South Korea even liked this new side of her more. He became even more flirty whenever he has the chance and all the time, philipia would blush madly. If it wasn't for her mask covering her face, she would've wanted to crawl under a rock and hide forever.

Additionally, everyone had now gotten used to her creepy, blank looking mask.

South Korea stood Infront of her desk, “Philipia! Wanna partner with me in making the lantern?”

Philipia replied, “Is having a partner necessary?”

South Korea laughed, “Yeah! Well, at least for me”

America, sitting behind philipia, couldn't help but butt in. “What do you mean partner? Philipia, don't believe this plastic idiot, you can even make a lantern in groups”

South Korea rebuke, “Watch it blondie! Whether to make it in group or not is up to philipia! But I do recommend partnering with me! I'm the best in making lanterns, I can even do calligraphy paintings if you'd like”

The words calligraphy touched a g-spot on China, “Are you confident enough in your calligraphy, South?”

South smirked and can already tell that China is someone who loves any form of art. He can still recall that one time China scolded him for more than an hour when he criticized a painting that was abstract and looked nothing but a bunch of shapes and random colors.

South Korea boasts, “of course! My handwriting is even more beautiful!”

Japan then raised his hand, “I wanna join! I like calligraphy too!”

South Korea grins, “alright! It's settled, later tonight when making the lanterns, we'll compete!!”

Philipia sighed. She packed up her things and quietly slipped away. As she walks through the hall, she met Vietnam, cosmos and Iran walking the opposite direction.

Vietnam smiled, “Lotus! Good afternoon! How was class?”

“Normal”

Iran then signed: ‘*Do you have the materials you need for the lantern festival later?’*

Philipia shakes her head, “I was about to buy at the store”

Cosmos then suggest, “Come with us , we were about to go to a nearby craft store”

Philipia didn't have anything wrong with it so she nodded and followed after them.

Once at the store, the manager greeted them enthusiastically. After all, they don't get to see four leaders everyday shopping in their store, there's even a female leader that was rare to see.

The manager was delighted and finally had no regrets to talk personally to four leaders.

Philipia looked around when she caught a delicate looking flower that resembles a sampaguita. She examined the material and thought it look good.

After paying for everything, the four leaders bought hot choco drinks on the way back to the academy.

Cosmos stops and looks towards a certain direction, “Isn't that Iceland?”

The three stops and turn to the direction he's pointing at and saw Iceland carrying a grocery bag before entering a tall twin building.

Vietnam said, “He stays in a condominium. He refuses to stay in the dorm”

Iran signed: ‘*I actually planned on living in a condominium at first’*

Vietnam asked, “Why?”

He replied: ‘*I thought some leaders would make fun of me. I can't hear and I can only talk using sign language. But then I met red rose and*

cosmos and thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to stay'.

Vietnam pouts, feeling wronged, “We've been hanging for a while now and you've never told me? Wait a second! What about me? How come it's only cosmic and lotus?”

Iran chuckled: *'I met cosmos and red rose first'*

Cosmos, “Even I didn't know. Besides, why would a leader bully another leader?”

Vietnam, “That's cause you're not a country leader cosmos, of course you wouldn't understand, you're on a whole different level”

Cosmos, “Speaking of level. Russia and Kazakhstan are graduating this year”

Philipia paused from drinking her drink and listened.

Vietnam nodded, “Oh yeah. They did enter Pangaea much earlier. But! We'll also be changing our uniforms! Next year we'll be wearing with a suit jacket like his. I'm getting sick of wearing the vest only”

Philipia looked straight ahead and thought of Russia and their last interaction. Now that she thinks about it. Russia didn't show himself either when she was discharge. The fact that almost everyone in their circle knew she got out, it would be impossible he didn't know of it.

Pursing her lips, she continued drinking and followed after the three.

Philipia arrived home and saw jack on the phone. She quietly closed the door behind her and just in time for jack to turn around and see her.

“Got it, I'll come immediately” Jack turned the phone off and sighed. “Niece, welcome home. are those for the lantern festival?”

Philipia nodded and walk to the bedroom, jack followed after and leaned on the door frame. “I won't be able to join the lantern

festival today. I have work to do at the faculty”

Philipia didn't mind and simply nodded.

Jack continued, “I heard that the lanter festival before was amazing. Did the academy participated?”

Philipia shakes her head, fix her mask as she face the mirror, “No. Before, it was Mr. Pangaea who personally handled the academy, but now it is Tethys so he implemented a lot of occasions”

Jack wasn't even surprised, “Heh. As expected”

Philipia checked outside the window, “Anyways, it is a first for me and for the others. And it'll be the last for russia”

Jack raised a brow, “Russia? Oh! He is graduating this year now”

At this moment, jack's phone rang. He sighed and hurriedly answered it. After he replied with a rather impatient tone, he hangs up.

“Gotta go now. I'll be home late, there's still leftover in the fridge. You don't have to wait for me” he said and kissed her forehead before walking out of the room and leaving the dorm.

Philipia sat on the bed and stared at her phone. Contemplating whether she should call Russia or visit him personally.

After recalling the times she was alone with Russia. Philipia hesitated and dialled his number.

Maharlika comments, “why are you scared to face him?”

‘I'm not, I'm just cautious. They had taken advantage of my naivety before’

It took a few seconds before Russia answered and replied lazily without any sort of emotion in his tone. “Who's this?”

Philipia felt a shiver run through her back, “Russia...”

As soon as Russia heard the voice. He straighten his back and lighten his tone. “Sunshine, hey. What's up?”

Philipia soften her tense body just now and replied, “I was just wondering if...”

If what? What was she going to ask again? Wasn't she only going to talk to him before he graduates?

Maharlika couldn't help but chuckle.

Russia can almost feel his throat tighten up as he waits for her next words. Those 4 seconds felt like 4 decades.

“If... you'd like to join me for tea someday? Or maybe walk around the city”

Philipia just blurted out anything that comes to mind and didn't think too much on her words.

Russia on the other hand felt like his ears were burning. He stared at the woman sleeping on his arms and the name of the caller on his phone.

For some reason, he felt guilty. But you can't blame him, he's a man and he has urges. Especially when he has a strong sex drive that he can't stop.

It is nature just trying to take over.

After gathering enough breath, he replied in a shaky tone. “Alright, I'll text you the place and time and date?”

Philipia nodded, “Sure. Then, see you at the lantern festival”

After that, she hang up.

The dial tone resounded and Russia breaths out. He got off the bed, wore a bathrobe and head to take a shower.

Philipia placed the phone down on the bedside before she flops back on the soft sheet and stare at the ceiling.

Perhaps it's guilt that she called Russia or perhaps she felt a little sad that the Russian giant will no longer be here to annoy everyone.

This made philipia realize that after this two years of freedom, she'll have to walk inside a cage willingly and never set foot outside again.

To think her freedom cost so much.

In order to make it worth it, she has to finish the trouble she started. Even if it means using someone else's resources.

Philipia only noticed how much she had changed and felt it was ironic.

A few weeks ago. Philipia had told her brother and jack about that place that Kati had kept a secret. Of course, both uncle and nephew were shocked and was even more dumbfounded when she showed them the place.

She had also told the others that were willing to help her to counter martial's revenge. It made the plan even more broad and diverse.

When philipia had told them that she planned to destroy it. Both jack and Greg object and wanted to keep the armory and vehicles; saying that there's a chance to use them and modified them.

Whilst Egypt object to let the treasures and gold be buried and insisted that it can be used as an insurance.

At that time, philipia didn't know whether to laugh or cry and allowed their request. On the other hand, Italy began telling her everything, even about his fated pair to prove that he already subjected himself to her for Kati's sake.

Leaving the dorm, it had already been 2 hours and the sky had gradually turned dark. Carrying a paper bag with the materials she needed. Philipia walked to the landing area where most students come and go.

The area was 5 acres wide to fit the whole male students, though it was still spacious and not crowded as she expected.

As she stared at the land, her eyes soften when she recalled a certain someone who left at the day of the spring party. She fixed her mask like how someone would habitually fix their glasses.

Philipia went to the group of students whom she recognize as her classmates. As expected, the male leaders were there and already began making the foundation for the lantern.

The others also joined in and their group became even more lively.

Canada sat close, as well as Estonia, Mexico and Ukraine. Almost everyone who are in line paid close attention to the female leader and stuck close to her.

Philipia can only ignore their obvious gaze and focus on making her lantern.

Crafting was one of the skills she loved to do, it was something she often does with her mother and was their bonding time together.

After a while, a bonfire was lit up. China then takes out a tea set and shared it with everyone, even reciting a few poems that eventually turned into a debate with his fellow Asians who has similar traditions.

Philipia listened at first but then resigned to continue her work. The debate was about poems at first but then it became serious and turned into politics.

Israel was sitting besides her, he whispered while gluing the rice paper, “Angel, how did you glue yours? Mine won't stick”

Philipia took his lantern and easily glued the paper on the bamboo frame then cut the edges with a few design patterns.

Israel smiled, “Even though I can't see you through your mask, I can tell you're more lively today”

Philipia hummed, “I am, because it's crafting”

Israel laughed, “I long knew you've liked crafting. I can still remember the time you taught us a few things. Especially using any

leaf to make a sound”

Philipia smiled unconciously as she recalled that moment. When she was done, she gave the lantern back to Israel, “I'm glad it was helpful in any ways for you”

Israel takes the lantern and began painting on it. His brush slides on the thin rice paper before it formed into a cloud shape.

Philipia reminded him, “make sure the paint isn't too wet”

As the night goes by. The autumn breeze passes through and a few students would sneeze and even shiver from the autumn wind. A few began to gather around the huge fire that's almost the same height as a tree.

When most of them were done, one by one, they all lit up their lanterns.

Ukraine held his lantern close and said, “make a wish after you release it”

This was philipia's first time releasing a lantern so she was a bit excited. But due to the mask, her excited and anticipating expression could not be seen.

As they all sang a song in synch, they released the lanterns that quickly filled the sky with bright orange light. Philipia then clasped her hands together and silently spoke her wish.

‘Freedom...’

Suddenly, there was a loud sound and a Confetti bomb exploded. Everyone looked up and cheered as more confetti bombs exploded.

Everyone began to sang a pangean folk song while dancing around the huge bonfire. Hands held together, circling around like ring around the Rosie.

Philipia didn't know the song so she remained at the side and clap her hands with the beat, watching her friends running around and even singing along.

Some of them would even slurred their words because they didn't know the lyrics.

While at the side, philipia felt a tap on her shoulder. Russia stood by her side carrying a lantern on his right and a *Pirozhki.

(*is one of the most popular Russian dishes, often sold as street food)

Russia greeted, “Sunshine, glad you came. Is your injury healed now?”

Philipia takes the snack “Yeah, it's mostly healed but sometimes, my hand would feel numb from time to time”

She took a bite out of the snack by lifting the bottom of her mask while it still obscure her face. Russia didn't mind and he has long known about his sunshine's new appearance.

No matter how curious he is, he can only respect her wishes.

Philipia then notice the lantern on his hand. She points and ask, “Why didn't you release it yet?”

Russia chuckled and placed the light weight lantern on her hand, “Will you release it for me?”

In pangaea, when someone gives their own lantern to someone and let that said person to release it, symbolises a confession.

Long ago. A man who is skilled in making a lantern liked a woman of high status. Even though he has a humble life and a humble man, he was sincere and passionate.

His love moved the woman, but because of status difference, they were faced with trials and tribulations. They were criticized by the people around them and was often separated by force.

One night, the woman ran away and planned to elope with the man. They successfully moved to a different place to hide and wait for the tide to calm. Since then, the woman who grew up pampered and spoiled became a hardworking wife who works alongside her

husband in making lanterns.

On their special evening, before their wedding night, the man kneeled down and hands his lantern to the woman and confessed with affectionate eyes, filled with tenderness and obvious doting. The woman accepted the lantern and releases it.

The sky was then given a light. Although small, it was pure and beautiful. The man said, “I love you dearly” with deep love in his heart.

Since then, they lived together happily, had children and grandchildren who followed a tradition where they would confess to the person they like using a lantern. This tradition soon then spread and was implemented in the lantern festival.

Handing ones lantern to another became a symbol of confession in Pangaea.

‘I love you dearly’

Russia whispered in his heart as he watched his sunshine release the lantern he made. It floated upward and soon joined the thousand lanterns in the sky that lights up the autumn evening.

Philipia faced him again, “It's your first and last lantern festival, Russia”

He chuckled, “It is a shame, but I enjoyed my time here. I guess it's just me back to reality, of course, once I graduate, my country will have pangaeas support and will prosper”

“Your country is already flourishing, isn't that enough?”

Russia grinned and ruffled her hue blue hair, “As a country leader, nothing is enough if you're thinking of your people”

Philipia secretly smiled and looked towards the bonfire where everyone is still having fun. “Even so... we'll miss you”

Feeling mischievous, Russia teased, “We? Why not you? Hahaha! Won't you admit you'll miss me more?”

Unexpectedly, philipia replied, “Yeah. I'll miss you too”

Before Russia could even process what she said, she was pulled by Poland and Ukraine to dance with them around the bonfire.

Somewhere in a tall building. Tethys stood Infront of his window and watch the evening sky to be filled with bright lanterns. He looks back at the unfinished lantern on his desk and sighed.

A pity he couldn't give it to his philia.

He takes the unfinished lantern then threw it on the trashcan before he takes his phone and dial a number.

...

Days after the lantern festival. Jack invited his old friends to help their plan on moving the weapons and treasure from the secret club. Although it is still questionable how Kati was able to move heavy vehicles such as tanks and was even able to steal them in the middle of war without being spotted. Jack threw those question at the back of his head.

The friends that jack brought were; Justin, Kevin, Charles and Victor. They were all the same as him. They all met in a very peculiar way which makes their relationship firm and stayed loyal and close.

Philipia had never met them but the way her uncle describe their personality and his time with them gives her a good impression.

Apparently, when he escaped from the Spaniards he had them to help him and him to rely on all through those years of travelling.

Philipia sat on a bench while answering a quick mind exercise from the book. Besides her is the bulletin board where test scores and exam scores were posted.

For the first time, she was placed on the 10th place. Although it didn't bother her that much, she still felt agitated. Old habits die hard she thought.

Sighing, she closed the book and places it back to her bag. She doesn't like to study hard nor is she trying to even study hard. All she ever wanted was to be herself and not force her mind to keep on working.

Maharlika who had been quiet, finally spoke. “Why are you so angry being smart?”

Philipia thought, ‘It's not because I'm angry, it's because I feel irritated that I'm irritated I'm in the 10th place. I shouldn't care but I just can't help it’

Maharlika took a few seconds to understand, “So you're angry because you're angry you got in 10th place?”

‘Yes’

Maharlika mumbled, “Silly girl. As these days go by, I understand you less and less”

‘Don't worry, I don't even understand myself either. I don't know if I'm just trying to run away from who I actually am or maybe I'm afraid to go back to the way I used to. Being naive and stupid’

Maharlika, “You're not stupid silly girl. Although you may be dumb, but you're not stupid”

‘I thought you were my internal self helper?’

Maharlika, “I am, but I only told the truth because that is what you want to hear”

Philipia sighed and leaned back on her bench. Suddenly, she felt a painful tightening on her chest as though someone was gripping on her heart.

“ah! W-what is...”

Maharlika also felt it and thought it was weird, “That was so painful! Are you okay philipia?” he asked, an obvious concern on his tone.

Philipia controlled her breathing for a moment before she nodded, “Yeah. It's just, it felt like I was having a heart attack”

Maharlika agreed, “You should go see a doctor”

Philipia checked the time and it was still early for her uncle to come home. Greg also texted her that he would be on abstinence on his phone due to his work as a soldier and was sent the main headquarters for a week.

She also didn't want to bother anyone nor she even want to talk anyone. Thus, philipia left the academy and went to a hospital by herself.

After the checkup, she was told that there wasn't any problems with her health and that the possibility of a female leader having an illness is near 0.

She still felt it was something wrong but she can only concede and walk back to the academy. On the way, she bought a yarn and needles, planning to make a scarf for winter for her brother and uncle.

“Miss philipia??? Omg! It is you! I was about to visit the academy!”

Philipia turn around and was greeted by a beaming smile under the autumn sun. If the mask wasn't covering her expression, Kyoto would've seen her squinting her eyes.

Kyoto had heard of philipia wearing a mask from her brother when she asked about her wellbeing. Even so, she still asked, “Miss philipia, why do you wear a mask? It's creepy!”

Mask: QnQ (cries_in_pain.jpg)

Philipia fixed her mask and replied, “Because of reason”

Philipia had already thought of this answer as reasonable, even though logically speaking it isn't. For her, she was just too tired to explain. Philipia had also realize how she literally had no energy to spare as much as she did before the incident.

Perhaps, if she grew up normally and her country wasn't colonized. Maybe her real personality would be more reserve and straightforward. At least, that's what she thinks.

Kyoto didn't mind her answer too much. She smiled even more and wrap her hands around philipia's arm, “Miss philipia! Are you here for a shopping too?”

Philipia shakes her head, “No”

“Then will you join me??? I heard the autumn sells here in Pangaea are topnotch! It's the best of the best!”

Without waiting for her answer, Kyoto had already began to drag her to a mall, going in every clothing shops she sees. For the first time, philipia felt fatigue, she never knew accompanying someone to shop would be this mentally draining.

One moment she would think the dress looks cute but then she'll see another cute dress and then began to talk the faults and uses of the dress in such details that she could make a research paper out of it.

Philipia stood on the side, holding a few shopping bags as she watch Kyoto speak to the attendant about the shoes.

She recalled one time where she accompanied Japan and America and they were in so synch in choosing a clothes that you'd think they were twins. If not for the fact they have different flag and different race, philipia might've thought they were.

At that time, she felt exhausted but not to this extreme.

Philipia secretly yawned inside her mask, listening to maharlika chuckling to himself and how he sympathize his silly girl about how she looked like that boyfriend of a rich young mistress.

At that moment, philipia caught someone on the corner of her eye.

‘That man, I've seen him earlier at the second floor’

When Kyoto paid and walked back to philipia, she immediately grab her wrist and walked fast towards the exit. Kyoto was confused

and thought she pissed her miss philipia!

“M-miss philipia! Are you angry! I'm so sorry! I was just so excited I couldn't help myself!”

Philipia replied calmly but her vigilance was perked. “that's not the case. I think someone is following us, it'd be best to be careful”

Kyoto finally realize the seriousness of the situation and obediently cooperated with miss philipia.

As they were about to reach the exit door of the mall. The lights suddenly went off and the people inside all simultaneously exclaimed in surprise. The exit and entrance door automatically shut itself as some sort of a defense mechanism. Unfortunately, the thing it wants to defend against is already inside.

Due to the sudden darkness, philipia's grip slipped off of Kyoto from the crowd pushing and pulling, trying to get out.

“Kyoto!” she yelled but receive no answer, only cries and scream from the people inside. Philipia tried to push against the crowd.

But then, the panic-stricken crowd all fell limp to the ground. One by one, it was like an infection that affected everyone, including philipia.

At first, her knees went soft and numb, then her arms wobbled and spasmed. She fell on the cold floor alongside with the other unconscious people.

After her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she noticed the place was engulfed in a thin mist. It was an odourless gas. Even a master at fighting won't be able to fight back from the heavy drowsiness.

Philipia could still hear a few people shouting for plea and even hear maharliaka's muffled voice in her head shouting she shouldn't sleep.

Unfortunately, the gas was too powerful and unknown that it knocked down a female leader upon inhaling.

...

Philipia was awoken by a jolt. She groaned at first after a sudden pain hit her head, she slowly opened her eyes and adjusted to her surrounding.

Maharlika scolded in her head, “You're cursed to be kidnapped easily forever!”

Philipia inwardly agrees. Ever since she was small, she had been a magnet and prone to kidnappers. No matter how strong she can take them down, she can still be caught by them after some unknown technique. But she is weak against gas or any chemical involve play. And most of her kidnappers use those.

Philipia sat up and wasn't surprised when she tried to move, only to find that her hand was tied behind her back.

“Miss philipia! You're awake! Wahhhh!”

Philipia turn to the side and saw Kyoto, also bounded by a rope, looking miserable. Her kimono was dishevelled and her hair was in disarray.

“Are you okay?”

Kyoto sniffled and nodded, “Hai! I'm okay. I'm just so scared! I really should've listened to my nanny! I really should've bought my bodyguards with me!”

Suddenly someone scoffed.

Philipia successfully sat up and examined their surrounding. Apparently, they weren't the only two who was taken. She was surprised at first but she immediately calmed down, “It's unexpected to see you here Iceland”

Iceland glanced at the two, “Even if you brought your bodyguard, they wouldn't be able to protect you. They'll only get killed”

Kyoto shivered at the thought, “Then, maybe my stubbornness is a blessing in disguise”

Philipia sat crossed legged, “Where are they taking us? What happened?”

The place they were in was inside a moving truck. There were a few boxes of pillows and blankets inside. The truck must've been a delivery truck of some sort of a bed making company.

Philipia calmed herself first and try to break free from the rope. But before she could even do one move from her survival skills, the rope suddenly felt like it was a rope of blades. Her flesh was immediately cut and blood seeped through.

Kyoto can see the pain and surprise on philipia's face. Before she was even taken, the mask she wore was thrown somewhere at the mall. Now, her every expression was exposed, but philipia was too busy trying to find a way out to even think about it.

Iceland sighed, “Don't struggle, it's futile. These aren't ordinary ropes, it can only be cut by a special scissor”

Kyoto asked, “T-then! Is this rope special too?”

Iceland explained, “It's a blade rope. Although it may look like an ordinary rope that people normally use, but if you don't wear special gloves to protect your hand, the bristles and the materials in it were made of small, tiny blades that can cut a grown mans body in half”

Philipia had heard of these ropes but was banned from ever producing after a few local citizens started using it with bad intentions. Although it isn't like a bioweapon or a gun. It still made Pangaea lost heavy casualties in one year.

She can still recall a news where someone was made to swallow the blade ropes like it was noodles. That person's lips and mouth were torn apart that you can see the skull and cut out flesh from it.

Philipia conceded and decides to meditate and gather enough strength for when they arrive to where their captors take them.

Kyoto saw the meditating miss philipia and the calm and collected, non caring Iceland and thought that she must be the only one who

was panicking.

‘No wait, maybe these two had so much experience that they've grown indifferent to it? Omg! Poor miss philipia!!!’

Kyoto cried inwardly and felt sympathy for the two leaders. As expected, being a country leader sure isn't an easy task. Even when she's just a city, she had experience but was never successful. In fact, the kidnapping attempts on her can be counted on her fingers.

She swallowed hard and asked meekly, “miss philipia, how many times were you kidnapped your whole life?”

Philipia said with her eyes closed, “356 times”

Kyoto, “…”

Iceland, “…”

Philipia added, “no wait... make it, 357 times”

Kyoto cried inwardly even more.

Iceland just stared indifferently at the female leader and thought. ‘Who would even count on their kidnapping attempts?’

Philipia then suddenly opened her eyes as a thought came to her, “Now that I think about it. Did Iceland get kidnapped from the mall too?”

Iceland replied, “no, at home. They shut the power down and a gas engulfed the whole building. Although I am an expert in gases and poisons, this gas is something I've never heard of”

“Then, is it a new type of gas sir Iceland?” Kyoto asked. Wanting to be apart of their discussion. Although she is a city, she is still had the mind of a working politician that often finds solution of trouble.

Cities are very hardworking people, that is why they are always the right hand man of a country leader.

Iceland replied, “It is”

Philipia had long guessed it so she wasn't the least bit surprised.

The truck then came to a stop. Both philipia and Iceland had their guards up, eyes both looking at the direction where the container door is.

The seconds they held their breaths, it felt like a year had pass before the sound of a latch was pulled and the door was opened.

Five men, all wearing casual dark clothes and a mask came into view. They hold M4 rifles each. The man with scar on his left eyes gestured two men from behind to drag them all out.

One man held Iceland while the other holds philipia and Kyoto. When Philipia got off the truck, she turn towards the direction of their ‘base’

It was only a simple two story abandoned courier station. Their leader threw the three of them a bag and ordered, “Change into these and leave your clothes there”

Without another word, the man holding the two female pulled them in and pushed them inside. Even Iceland was pushed inside. They untied the rope around them and waited outside.

Kyoto pouts, “So rough!”

Inside the courier station was mostly empty, there wasn't even anything that can help them escape. But even if they try to run away, the place they took them at seemed to have strayed at the mainland.

In order to live longer, one must abide your captor first before making your move.

Philipia already began undressing, Iceland turned around and undress as well.

Kyoto saw the calm expression of the two leaders and somehow, she felt a sense of ease and safety around them. The fact that they are calm means they'll be able to escape and get out of this predicament.

Kyoto went to a corner that isn't shone by the light and changed there. Her kimono is rather thick and had a lot of layers since it's for more colder seasons.

Kyoto then spoke, “Miss philipia, don't you think it's weird? Pangaea is the safest country. Although it doesn't necessarily have a perfect 0% crime rate. It is still safe. How come we were kidnapped easily? Is there some sort of hole?”

Iceland replied, “Because the security in Pangaea was shut down. For whatever reason, they did not give any reminder or an advance warning. It was just shut down out of the blue”

As Iceland spoke, philipia remembered what Greg had said from the text.

[I'll be on duty in a couple of weeks. My men and a few soldiers were called back in hq. Don't worry, when I get back I'll bring you a present]

Kyoto gasped softly, lowering her voice, “Then, was the security in Pangaea attacked?”

“Unlikely” Iceland replied “Panagea's security system can only be accessed by Pangaea himself”

“Is sir Iceland saying that Mr. Pangaea deliberately shut the security down?”

Before Iceland could reply. The door was pounded heavily and a stern commanding voice yelled, “QUIT DILLY DALLYING! HURRY UP!” he murmured, “Fucking leaders”

Philipia narrowed her mismatched eyes and hurriedly put on the gray shirt and pants that's as given. Kyoto and Iceland had the same.

When they came out, they were once again bounded but with a zip lock. Although philipia and Iceland had two zip lock around their wrist.

They got in another truck and drove for another 5 hours before

boarding a container ship.

Somehow, philipia can already tell what their doing.

And as expected, they brought them inside a container with a few people in.

Iceland hissed when one of the men kicked him on the stomach for no reason and sat up, “I think we're the only royals here”

Philipia scanned the people inside the dim container and noticed that they were all normal Pangaean citizens.

Kyoto sobbed and leaned closer to her miss philipia, “A-are they gonna sell us?”

Iceland leaned on back and sighed, “obviously. Selling a human organs from a Pangaean person is in high demand. They have a very special Constitution that makes them live longer through 200 and have a very healthy organs. Very rarely does a Pangaean person get sick or have cancer or perhaps organ failure”

Kyoto shuddered, and so did the others inside. They were long aware of their own bloodline but to think there were people bold enough to actually do it.

Philipia started biting the ziplock while twisting and wriggling her wrist around that a red bruise started forming.

Kyoto cried, “How cruel! Why would they do such a thing?”

Iceland scoff, “You haven't seen enough evil in this world”

Philipia clicked her tongue and threw her hands on her lap, conceding defeat for now. “They're no longer pangaeans”

Everyone in the container turn to her. Kyoto asked, “What do you mean miss philipia?”

Iceland remained silent and was also curious. Perhaps philipia already found out why they are here. Through the whole ride, philipia was the only one quiet. She kept her eyes close and

meditating, as though trying to find out the truth.

Philipia answered, “They're no longer Pangaeans but Tethyrians. It's Tethys' turn now. Since Mr. Pangaeas security had been shut down, he must've given Tethys a test on how he'll protect his people by his own power without relying on him.”

Everyone soon all understood and they couldn't help but lower their heads. They were only citizens and they couldn't voice out their complaints. Thankfully, Iceland did.

He chuckled coldly and said, “Test? He's using real human lives here. Even a leader was taken because of his so called ‘test!’...”

“Tethys isn't aware, and we all know what type of person Mr. Pangaea is”

Kyoto pouts angrily and exclaimed, “He's so mean! So mean!!!”

Iceland then glance at the female leader who is sitting calmly at the side, “How are you sure he didn't know?”

“look around you. If Tethys was aware, no one would be captured”

Iceland raised a brow, “You have such confidence on that man, why?”

Philipia leaned back leisurely as though she was sitting in her room on the couch and watching TV. “Because he's Tethys. That's all you need to know”.

_____

End of chapter 19 : Hyperventilate

Coming Chapter 20 : Blood redder than maple

_____

Author has something to say...

Does Chapter 20 title rings any bell? If not we can't be friends

QwQ.

Jkjk .

TWl6cmFpbQ==

Chapter 20 : Blood redder than maple

Chapter 20 : Blood redder than maple

The country fell into chaos, their once proud security and safety fell apart in one day. And in one day, 40% of the population in Pangaea we're taken, killed, and even harvested alive.

It was as if the country fell into an apocalypse.

Tethys threw his documents as well as any other displays he gets his hands on across the office.

He yelled and exclaimed, “EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON? WHAT THE FUCK IS MY FATHER THINKING?!”

The secretary flinched and shivered in fear but he answered truthfully, “My lord! Mr. Pangaea had turned the security in the country off to test your skills on how you'll protect it wi--”

“To hell with it! For one second! Just one fucking second! The fucking country fell into chaos! almost all the people were eight her killed or dead! Or worse, abducted!”

Many evil people had their eyes on the country. This one opening was swarmed in like a tide.

The secretary replied with a trembling voice, “I- I'm sorry my lord! I am only passing a message! But my lord, if you don't do something now the death rate will only continue to rise!”

Tethys then glared at the man. His knuckles turned white, aching to just punch the guy. “Are you ordering me!?”

He suddenly release his heavy pressure that made the secretary

choke and fall to his knees. He begged while catching for air, “My lord! My lord! Please have mercy! I am only passing a message! Please have mercy!”

Even the guards felt the prickling and painful pressure.

But before they could choke to death, Tethys' own secretary barged in. He quickly suppressed the heavy pressure that greeted him and yelled with urgency, “Sir! Three royals were captured!!! One of them was miss philipia sir!”

The anger immediately extinguished when he heard the words. Like a spell, Tethys dialed a number and ordered a search and rescue immediately.

He points for his secretary and the secretary on the floor, “Come with me, we'll deal the problems and search for philia. Use any means to track her! I don't care how much you pay! just do it!”

...

Philipia was awoken from a jolt. She looked around when she realize she's still in the container.

Kyoto yawned and saw philipia wriggling her wrist again. “Miss philipia, don't force yourself, you said, sir Tethys will surely find a way and rescue us.” since philipia said Tethys could do it, she had blindly believed her 100% that she was able to rest easy.

Philipia said while biting the end of the zip lock, “It's best to try and escape. As of now, we're probably somewhere in the pacific.”

Iceland spoke, “How did you know?”

“the way the ship moves. If we can escape, we could probably get to see China's boat or perhaps mine”

Kyoto awed, “How did you know just by the movement of the sea miss philipia?”

Iceland replied instead, “She lives near it, you'd be surprise to hear the amount of times they have a flood”

Kyoto gasped. She did know about the vulnerability of her country but she didn't think it would be this worse.

Philipia was indifferent to his words and kept wriggling her wrist until it became red. She sighed and looked around and saw a hair clip from one of the citizens. She took it from her and broke it in half then began to rub it on the container wall to sharpen the edges.

It took her about an hour before it was sharp enough and started cutting the zip lock.

It took a few seconds before the lock snapped and philipia successfully broke free.

She immediately took the sharpened hair clip and cut the lock that ties Kyoto and Iceland, as well as the rope binding the citizen.

Iceland sighed and massage his wrist. “So? What's the plan?”

Philipia stretch her body and said, “Let's first keep these citizens safe. Kyoto, you'll guide them while we take down the people outside”

Kyoto beamed and saluted, “ma'am yes ma'am!”

Philipia smiled which took the people inside aback. Except for Iceland who was facing the container door and his back facing them.

The words of a female leader is really powerful.

Philipia stood next to Iceland who gave her a quick glance. As though they have a mutual understanding, Iceland understood her intentions and so did she.

They walk close to the container and leaned their ears on it.

Iceland, “I hear 8 men. 4 of which are carrying a weapon of their own”

Philipia, “Do you know how to send an SOS code to pangaea?”

“yeah. Base on the ship we're in, it's possible to send one. though, I thought we were gonna search for China's boat or yours?”

Philipia shakes her head, “They shifted the direction.”

Philipia gave Kyoto instructions on where to hide while they fend off their captors. Earlier when they were boarding, philipia had been surveying the ship for any possible escape and hidden routes. As of now, she has 3 possible plan on how to hide them if plan A didn't work.

All the citizen held their hands and Kyoto stood Infront of them. Philipia and Iceland leaned on the container door and started banging on it to attract attention.

Two men got annoyed and kicked the container, yelling, “Be quiet! Or I'll shoot you off!”

They still kept banging that he grew irritated and pulled the latch. But before he could open it. It was kick wide open by Iceland and philipia and immediately detained the two men, knocking them unconscious.

“kyoto go!”

Philipia and Iceland quickly engaged into battle with the other patrolling men. Even though they were bare and with no weapons, they outmatched their opponents with only a few moves.

The movements were not quite the same but the ruthlessness from both was definitely on the same level. Iceland glance at the female who lifted a man up high around his neck and snap it. The man spasmed and blood seeped from the corner of his lips.

She threw the man who was now limp on the floor and took his gun before throwing another one to him.

‘Not bad’ he thought.

He'd long heard of the female leader and her skills in combat but he never really saw it for himself. He had misjudged her and thought that information was just something to protect herself, but reality

came slapping him on the face when her moves and technique were merciless and vile.

Suddenly, the ship sounded an alarm and more men with guns in their hands came running to their way.

Philipia looked back at the direction where the citizen and Kyoto was hidden and felt at ease. She loosen her shoulder and crack her knuckles. Before the first man can even take a step down, She surged forward and made a clawing attack without hesitation, gripping at the enemy's leg bone and twisting it. The man screamed as his leg was broken.

Iceland then used his gun. Each bullet wasn't wasted and each bullet fired was planted on the enemy's head.

He scoffed and reloaded his weapon.

He turn towards the female and saw her impaling a man on a steel bar then used his own gun to shoot his own head.

He shivered a little and decided to just focus on his side.

It only took a few hours for them to almost clean up the place but unexpectedly, the ship contained more men than they anticipated.

They were about to attack again but then a man wearing a mask and dark clothes came out of the upper cabin where the captain resides.

Iceland and philipia both felt that cold chill on their back as they stared at the person.

Philipia muttered, "Fallen leader..."

Fallen leaders were mostly leaders who were colonized and their country was fully taken over. USSR and third Reich can be considered fallen leaders but they are mostly called retired leaders since they still have a special status and position. Unlike the man before them, he might've been a once powerful leader who govern a country but was colonized by someone even more powerful, throwing him off of his position and stripping him off of his status.

Back then, Kati was lucky enough to keep his position when Spain colonized their country. If not, perhaps her father would've been a fallen leader like him.

Iceland immediately stood Infront of philipia and was attacked out of the blue.

Philipia had been training for all her life, this was the first time her reaction was one second slow.

Iceland groaned and his forehead had a deep cut that blood immediately came out. Philipia immediately jumped back from the hand that was about to grab her.

The man froze and stared deeply at the female leader. He stayed in place as though he was scrutinizing her from head to toe.

Philipia felt her body tense for a second when she heard a click of a gun. She barely dodged a bullet that scraped her temple.

Panic piled up in her when she couldn't avoid an attack from the fallen leader. He grab her by the neck and slam her on the ground, the same way he did with Iceland who remained unmoved and paralyzed in place.

He wheezed and coughed out blood. Struggling to move his head towards the direction where philipia is being slammed on the ground once and twice.

The fallen leader muttered, “You're her descendant...”

Philipia gritted her teeth as the enemy now held her neck on the ground.

Maharlika inside her head kept screaming:
“Aahhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We have to escape! He's crazy! He's scary!!!!!!!! Silly girl! Stop being silly and run away!!”

‘I would if I... could!’

The man tighten his grip even more that philipia began to choke and gasp for breath.

“Phili...pia” Iceland called.

As expected of a fallen leader. Even though he had lost his position and status, their level was the same as heaven and earth.

As her vision fades, the last thing she saw was Kyoto still in her hiding spot, looking at her with worry and tears in her eyes.

...

Philipia woke up and saw a canopy of a bed. She wore a white dress that has a tail that drags on the floor. She was bare feet and wore nothing underneath except the white dress that barely covers her shoulder and chest.

Maharlika who fell asleep with philipia, also awoken and noticed the sudden change of surrounding, as well as the change of her clothes. He cried, aghast, “What in the!? Why are you wearing such clothes at such a time?!”

Philipia massage her head and got off the bed towards the door. Unexpectedly, it was unlock which raise her suspicion even more.

She raised her vigilance as she walk down the hall. The place was decorated in a modern style yet it gave the feeling of solemnity. The lights were dimly lit as though she was walking in a place that would give a surprise that she would not anticipate.

Maharlika sighed, “Look at you, looking so beautiful but your looks could kill”

Philipia walk down the hall and the fabric of her dress would tremble a little from that soft, small wind. Like a runaway princess inside an abandoned castle.

Philipia entered another room and saw a man patrolling the area. She quickly made her move by silencing him through the nape and take his gun.

Cocking the weapon, she pulled the man and hid him inside the bathroom of the bedroom she entered before going back to the hall.

‘I have to find Iceland and Kyoto first!’

As she thought of that, she felt the same heavy pressure and couldn't help but swiftly turn her back and face the fallen leader. He stood at the opposite side, still wearing the same dark clothes and mask.

“Why are you doing this?”

Maharlika sighed in her head, “silly girl, why bother asking? Run!”

Philipia listened and sprinted off to the opposite side. She ran barefoot and entered any door she could find just so she can escape.

But the more she ran, the more she felt like something was wrong. As she turn to the corner, she pushed opened a door and was greeted by a disgusting scene.

A big fat man was on top of a small girl. Both were naked. The girl was tied to the post, her ankles were tied so it was spread and the fat man sat between her.

The girl didn't seem to be herself when her eyes were so unfocused. It was clear she had been drugged.

The fat man was giggling and drooling as he grope his hand here and there on the girl, he then pause and turn to philipia. His eyes filled with disgusting lust, beamed even more when he saw the female leader.

Philipia almost wanted to vomit when his eyes roam around her body as though she was being violated. And the fact she was made to wear this dress with nothing underneath made it worse.

She raise her gun and aimed, “Get down!”

The fat man didn't seem to be afraid. He gesture a look from behind her and the bad premonition came over philipia.

The fallen man twisted her arm and was immediately detained, her hands on her back and the gun taken away.

Maharlika sighed, “Years and decade of training gone to waste”

The fat man laughed out loud. He got off the bed, took the small bell on the bed side...

All of a sudden, three butlers came out. Two of which helped the girl off the bed, and one helped the fat man get dress into a white bathrobe.

The fat man then said, “It has always been my dream to meet a female leader! Hahahah! And to think I'd get to have one to serve me on my bed”

Philipia spat, “Who serves who?! How dare you! You filthy pig!”

The words infuriated the fat man and he slapped her across the face, “Dumb bitch! perhaps you still don't know your own place! Look here! This place is my territory! Nobody can come in or out willingly without my permission! try if you dare but I will tell you this, you will be kneeling before me”

Philipia can almost smell the strong scent of that disgusting sweat. She gritted her teeth and struggled from the fallen leader's grip.

She turn her head to him and exclaimed, “Sir! You're also a leader! I can tell you're someone who is worthy and strong! Why did you have to fall to such a degree and serve such a man like him!?”

The fallen leader did not reply, he simply tighten his grip that caused philipia to yelp.

The fat man laughed while holding his huge stomach, his fat fingers were filled with bulging gold rings that looks too gaudy on him.

“Even if he is, he's already fallen. He has been serving me more than a decade now, he won't be moved by such a female leader. Ha! The thought you'd be squirming beneath me, I can't wait! Hahahaha!”

“Bastardo! Where is Iceland!? Where did you take him?!”

Everything was escalating too fast that philipia's mind began to

panic. She struggled so hard that she felt like her bones would break.

The fat man scoffed and walked to the opposite room. Inside was a chair, and on that chair was Iceland who was beaten up badly.

Philipia struggled even fiercely that she began cursing in her language. The feeling of powerlessness was then again, coming over her.

The fat man gesture his butler who then slap Iceland awake.

He groaned and flutter his eyes open. At first it was unfocuse but he gradually felt clearheaded.

Philipia wanted to jump forward but was held back, “Iceland wake up! Wake up!”

The fat man grew irritated and spat, “Shut that bitch up!”

The fallen leader then covered her mouth.

Maharlika cried, “You really can't fight back silly girl?!”

‘Where's red?! Scarlet?! Where's Cain?!’

Maharlika flinched and scolded her, “Philipia! Do you even know what scarlet and Cain are capable of? there's going to be a massacre!”

‘Then do you expect me to die here?! Can't you see the situation I'm in?!’

Maharlika sighed, “Even if they were here, I will not allow it! besides, right now they're asleep, if I force them awake you'll lose your mind!”

During their conversation. Iceland was taken and the both of them were drag back to the room where philipia woke up.

‘maharlika! Right now!’

Philipia was then held down to the bed while they inserted a syringe to her neck. She felt the liquid going through her veins and spreading throughout her body.

Maharlika was in a dilemma, “I can't! If you lose your mind I won't be able to save you!”

Philipia began to feel weak. She was still conscious but she was weak, as though she was drunk and high at the same time.

The fallen leader placed her limped body on the middle of the bed and tied her hands to the bedpost with a blade rope.

Philipia cursed inwardly. She looked at the direction where they tied Iceland to another chair and make him watch the whole process.

In philipia's ear, all she could hear was the pulsing of her heartbeat. Her vision was blurry but she can make out the people by their shapes and body.

The fat man laughed and was extremely delighted. His dirty words echoed in her head but she paid it no attention.

He then dismiss the people inside to guard the room. Iceland was also struggling to break free but the rope that was used on him was the blade rope.

No wonder he was able to capture a female leader, a leader and a city in one day. The disgusting insect is corrupt and shady man that should not have existed.

Using money and power, his mind thinks he can take control over those who he thinks are above him.

But he made a mistake.

The fat man leaned close to her ear and whispered, “Which part do you want me to make you feel good?”

Philipia answered, “Chest...”

The fat man laughed and licked his lips in the most disgusting way ever.

But before his hand could even touch her, he felt a pain on his chest. He looked down and saw a hand with their wrist covered in blood. The palm that strike him broke his ribs that snapped in half and punctured his heart.

The fat man fell on top of her. Philipia hurriedly kicked him off of her and got off the bed. She panted heavily as she try to focus on the pain in order to relieve the numbness and dizziness in her head.

Now this takes her back when she was also abducted by Spain's people and that she had to slam her head against the car. Fate really likes to mock her. It is addicted in making her suffer.

If she gets kidnapped one more time she will set a random place on fire! Even if it was a church or someone's house!

Iceland finally stopped struggling and breath a sigh of relief. “Philipia are you okay?!”

She gesture a shhh sign as she quickly try to unbind the rope.

She got hurt in the process but that wasn't important when there are still people outside.

“Where's Kyoto?”

Iceland hissed at his bruised and cut up wrist, “They're okay. I have them do plan B”.

Philipia eased up and looked back to the fat man groaning on the bed. “You... aren't you... Russia's people?”

The fat man glared at her but he could not reply.

“dont worry, you won't die. I'll make sure of it. I'll only hand you to your leader and we'll see how it goes”

The fat man's face paled and his eyes screaming in terror. If Russia knew of his existence and what he has done. He will for sure, suffer

more than just death!

Philipia went to a window and saw the scenery outside. It seemed to be a small private island.

Iceland points, “There, that's the ship!”

Both leaders held on to the frame of the window and climbed down from the balcony. At this point, they no longer care if they were caught or not, all they wanted was to send a SOS code to pangaea by the ship.

After experiencing danger, a normal person would feel terrified; but apparently they were the opposite, their fear turning into anger.

As expected, they immediately found out about their master who now has a fractured rib and punctured heart on the bed.

Soon, the villa became lively in the night. Guns and screaming can be heard.

Philipia and Iceland defeated anyone who got in their way. The enemy was astounded by them when one was beaten for 5 hours, and the later was drugged and wearing nothing but a silk dress that seemed uncomfortable for fighting.

This is probably the real strength of a leader. No matter what method they use, they seem immune to it already. After all, these people had already lived a hundred years!

“We should hurry! I don't like being detained at all!” Iceland shot a man as he said, gritting his teeth in annoyance.

Philipia complained, “You should try to be in my position”

Iceland was about to reply when a group of well-trained people with their faces covered stood Infront of them by the docks, they glance at the unfocused and drugged philipia and back to the beaten Iceland.

Philipia, was swaying left and right, saw one with their guns aiming their attack at the two leaders.

‘Tsk! They never end!’

Maharlika shuddered and said, “Calm down.”

No one saw how what happened as there was only a fleeting shadow; but then skinny fingers, were already around the person’s throat.

Philipia spoke through gritted teeth, “Get. Out. Of. My. Way!!!!!”

As she screamed, a heavy pressure surrounded the area that made the group of enemy fall to their knees.

Alpha's orders!

Iceland felt the same heavy pressure around him that made him catch for his breath. This was worse than when he was beaten! A force submission from a leader is always painful and terrifying.

It only lasted for a few seconds, but those few seconds felt like eternity.

The man she held around the throat couldn't even make a sound before they spasmed and stopped breathing.

The cruel method got the attention of the rest of the group; they had no choice but to halt and take precautions against this drugged leader who seemed like she couldn’t even stand straight.

What's more, she was able to use her own pressure, meaning, she's stronger and more cruel.

Philipia threw the dead corpse as though it was garbage. She grab Iceland and run past the group.

They only stayed still for a second before they all fall lifeless on the ground. Their necks squirted blood where a huge slit can be seen.

It was only for a second but philipia managed to take them down in one move.

After running towards the stairs that lead to the ship, philipia

kicked the connection off and hurriedly ran to the captain's cabin.

“Go do what you have to do!” she yelled and run out once again.

“It would be best not to”

Philipia paused and turn towards the direction of the group. Kyoto was held by the fallen leader, a gun pointed to her head while the citizen behind them had long been dead.

Kyoto cried, “They found us miss philipia!... Th-they killed everyone...”

Iceland was inside the control room and saw this scene. His body trembled when he recalled the moment he told her to initiate plan B.

Is that why the people were unfaze and didn't even question him where the citizen were? Is it because, they had long found them and killed them on the spot?

Philipia felt her heart beating wildly, almost jumping out of her chest.

The night sky was covered in gray clouds, cold wind blew past and droplets of rain fell one after another.

The blood on the floor of the ship mixed with the rain. Making the pool of blood even more grotesque.

Their bodies were twisted and head chopped off. Philipia can almost hear their bones breaking, their painful cry, their begs and plea. She gave them hope and confidence but she did not meet their expectation.

It was as if she was back to that time again.

A pity her mask was thrown somewhere. murderous intent resurfacing on her vacant expression. Even Kyoto felt her hair standing.

The fallen leader also felt it but he was indifferent to it. He had long

since seen these types of leaders.

“Country leader Iceland, please get down from there, otherwise...” he release the safety of the gun which made Kyoto jump and cry even more, “Her brain will splatter all over the place.”

Philipia didn't even bother and quickly charge at the man. He pushed Kyoto out of the way and aimed his gun at her.

She had faith in her own capability, but quickly realized the man was quite a tough one the moment the fight started. Although he is a senior who has more experience. A fallen is still a fallen.

Iceland ran outside and took Kyoto away from the fight. To think philipia had the courage to bet Kyoto's life made Iceland somewhat feeling complicated for the female leader.

They had created continuous pressure on all sides, making the situation increasingly perilous. Philipia ended up forced to retreat while fighting, with the man, swiftly and simultaneously closing in on her, blocking all escapes.

‘damn it!’

Philipia panted as the drug acted up again which gave the fallen leader a chance to kick her heavily on the gut.

Philipia immediately blocked it but was pushed a few steps away, her eyes darkened, she watched the man unblinkingly, “He's the same age as Mr. Pangaea!”

Iceland couldn't understand it at first, “What?!”

Philipia replied, “Just now, the aura and pressure he exuded were the same as Mr. Pangaea, hence, they are of the same time!”

Kyoto suddenly cried out when philipia dodged a bullet. She almost slipped from the slippery floor added by the rain.

Iceland and Kyoto ran back to the control room and began turning the devices on.

Philipia continued while she hid behind a container, holding her head as the shots of the bullets kept raining on her direction, “I've heard about a leader! From a long time ago! their country was prosperous! It was everything that every country wished! But Pangaea came and took over it, and for the first time, that country tasted defeat and was stripped from their position! At first, I didn't think too much of it, but now it all connects!”

All of a sudden, He takes out a gilbertese shark tooth weapon. Both sides were sharp edges of a shark teeth that would certainly hurt.

Maharlika cringed at the thought, “silly girl! Don't be reckless!”

‘If you'd only wake anyone of my protectors then maybe we wouldn't be at a disadvantage!’

Maharlika grumbled, “I told you, I couldn't take that risk! Besides, you aren't weak willed. Silly girl, you can't always depend on them”

Philipia kept avoiding every attack the fallen leader makes. She can tell that her words stimulated his anger and frustration.

She didn't let the momentum go to waste, murderous streak made its appearance again, and she started charging at him without a care.

Philipia was flexible, but not enduring enough in a long fight. She became frantic after the continuous attack of that weapon she had never seen before, moving three steps back, trying her best to defend herself. She had exhausted half of her strength with the fat guy when she struck a palm attack to his chest, her yet-to-recover limbs now temporarily numb.

“Sir! If the reason you allowed such a thing happen and serve under such a master is because of an order from Pangaea, please do not involve us! We are new leaders and we had nothing to do with your fallen country!”

His hands shook in anger. The sword would've plunged into her chest if she didn't avoided in time, and if it did hit her, it would deeply lodged in her ribcage and unable to be removed.

Such a powerful weapon. For sure that type of shark teeth had long since extinct. Just from the looks of it, philipia can tell it was more than a hundred years old.

Iceland, after a fair time to catch his breath, didn’t rejoin the fight right away and ran back towards the control room with Kyoto. She stayed outside the door, worriedly watching the fight between the fallen leader and her miss philipia.

If only she could fight too and not a burden, maybe they could defeat him! But she obviously can't defend herself, she couldn't even defend those citizen.

Kyoto saw everything that was done to them. When philipia fell unconscious when they were caught, it wasn't even an hour when the fallen leader who defeated the two leader down to find them.

At first, he detained them and kept them back in the container, but after one of them tried to escape, the rest were also implicated and killed on the spot.

That moment was when Kyoto realize how frustrating weakness can be.

Kyoto hurriedly said, “Sir Iceland! When will you be able to contact the outside!”

Iceland clicked his tongue, “Give me a minute! They shut the whole damn thing down!”

Iceland then bent down and began to take out the wires and cords under the controllers.

The sword was extremely sharp that it could cut a metal pipe or even slice a container like it was tofu.

Philipia made a back flip and slipped from the slippery floor, barely dodging the shark sword.

The fallen leader panted as he stared at the female leader, who is also panting, looking at him unblinkingly. He stared at her bloody wrist and her sorry looking appearance and couldn't help but

admire her perseverance.

Not many people could last this long when sparring with him. At least, not someone who actually has no weapon while wearing an uncomfortable dress that barely covers her body. Philipia was also drenched from the rain so the fabric glued to her body that shows her curves and skin colour due to the white fabric.

The fallen leader leisurely gave her some pointers, “impressive. I can tell your good, but not that good enough for me. Your moves don't have structure to it”

Philipia replied, “Thank you. It's not everyday you get a lesson from a senior leader”

After she spoke, he suddenly leaped towards her and appeared before her. He was quick as a lightning, his moves became even more fierce, faster and harder to avoid.

Kyoto felt tense when she also saw the sudden change of the man's attack. For a second, she felt like her miss philipia was going to be killed!

Stomping her feet, she sounded a bit like Tokyo, “sir Iceland! Is it ready yet! I've seen enough movies to know that you'll be able to fix it only when it's at the climax!”

Iceland wasn't even in the mood to joke around, “What the hell are you even talking about?!?”

At this moment, philipia was suddenly sent flying towards a container, creating a human shaped crater. She coughed out blood and wheezed.

Both Iceland and Kyoto were taken aback. When philipia got off the container, she fell on the floor and held her aching body that felt like a hundred hammer was hammering it.

Kyoto felt a bad premonition and didn't think twice to run towards her lady!

Iceland yelled and reach out, “No! Don't go there!”

Philipia also saw the moment she ran to her. After spitting so much blood, her voice became hoarsed, “Kyoto, stay...”

Before she could finish her sentence, a shadow covered her and blood splattered to her face.

She looked up, trembling, and saw a small girl blocking her away, receiving the attack instead.

Kyoto wanted to cry so bad. This was the first time she ever felt such overwhelming pain. But the thought that her miss philipia would be harmed, she couldn't bare it!

She held on to the blade and kept it buried in her. The fallen leader clicked his tongue in annoyance.

Using this moment, philipia jumped up and kicked the fallen man, causing him to release his hold from the sword.

They fought hand to hand yet philipia was still at a disadvantage and couldn't really counter him.

“You are weak! You may be her descendant but you are nothing compared to Armageddon!” he yelled.

Philipia's eyes widen as she stared at the man before her. Anger welled up in her chest and she kicked him on the stomach. Taking advantage of them falling backwards to restrain the pulse, she grab a nearby metal pole that was sliced cleanly by his sword afterwards, cracking down on their pressure point to kill them for good by burying that metal pole on his neck.

The fallen leader didn't expect her to have any more energy to fight back. Unfortunately he misjudged her and underestimated her strength.

“I'm getting too old...” he choked in his own blood “But let me tell you... your ancestor is a fucking... bitch...”

The fallen man suddenly placed his right palm on her right eye and partially released his marks. It glowed and connected to hers almost instantaneously, like spark of an electricity.

Philipia pulled back from the sudden prickling pain, her right eye began to bleed tears as the burning sensation engulf it.

“what did you...”

He laughed bitterly and pulled the mask off of his face.

Perfectly sculpted face, high bridge nose, dark amber color eyes similar to crimson and thin lips. This man was Pecleos.

The leader who's country that existed eight hundred and thousand years ago.

“To show you that your bloodline isn't as clean as you think...”

Philipia pursed her lips and stood up.

To make sure this man wouldn't be able to get up anymore, she grab a gun nearby aimed it on his forehead, “My ancestors fault, is their fault, it has nothing to do with me”

Pecleos scoffed.

Bang!

The fallen leader had finally met his ending.

Philipia breathed out heavily and walked back towards Kyoto who was now being cradled by Iceland. The sword had long been taken out since it was coated with poison, for philipia, it wasn't a problem, poisons don't affect female leaders. But to city's and below, they are still deadly.

Philipia kneeled before her and pressed her hand on the wound. She reassured, “Kyoto, look at me, don't close your eyes okay? It's just a stab wound it'll be easy to heal it. Iceland, I'll take care of here! You go and send an SOS call!”

Iceland nodded and carefully hand Kyoto to philipia's arms and ran back to the control room.

“M-miss philipia... was I useful?”

Philipia nodded, “Yes, you were, if it weren't for you, I would've been dead and I wouldn't be able to kill him”

Her pale lips formed into a smile, Kyoto sighed in relief, “I'm so glad... Ever since I was born, I had always been pampered. I've never known self defense, even so, I wanted to be strong and not depend on others. That's why, I really liked it when you depended on me back then with sir greece...”

Philipia recalled the time Greece misunderstood Kyoto as his pen pal. At that time, she was just so scared Greece will get angry that she didn't think too much about it.

Kyoto continued, her obsidian eyes looking straight at the gray sky. “The truth is miss philipia... I didn't come to Pangaea just to shop, I actually came for tokyo. I heard she's almost giving birth...”

Philipia sniffled and press on the wound even more, yet the blood kept slipping through her fingers, dying her hand a darker shade of red.

“I'm sad of what happened to you but... I've always wanted to be an auntie...”

Kyoto's eyes started to swell, the rimmed turned red, her nose began to feel itchy and hot, “I wanted to take care of her baby... I wanted to hold a baby's hand...”

Kyoto then held philipia's, her cold skin in direct contact to a warm one.

“Miss philipia... Will you... take care of her baby?”

Philipia choked in her tears and couldn't answer immediately.

Iceland, inside the control room also began to cry. He would blink rapidly in order to see clearly so that he can turn the system on, so that they can go home and save her. Yet the glistening tears would blurry it.

Although the ship is still by the island, the mansion had long been burned by the fat man's people and left through a helicopter.

Philipia shakes her head and said, “Just take it easy! Don't close your eyes!”

Kyoto was also unwilling to leave. But she is just so weak right now, she feels lightheaded and sleepy. The wound on her stomach feels cold too, “Miss philipia...”

“Kyoto, please hold on!— Iceland! Hurry! Please! I beg you! Please!” philipia didn't reply to her request but Kyoto could somehow feel she already acknowledge it.

As though a heavy burden was lifted from her shoulder. She smiled.

The hand holding hers starts to grow heavy, Kyoto smiled contentedly, “I lived well... I grew up well... Thank you miss philipia... Thank...”

At the end, Kyoto's voice faded. Her eyes remained half open, her lips formed into a soft smile until she stopped breathing. She lay lifeless in philipia's arms.

Philipia's breathing became rapid as she released her mark.

Maharlika exclaimed, “It's too dangerous! Philipia!”

There was a throbbing pain in her head. At first, it was only her right eye that was crying of blood, now it was both. Even her nose started to bleed.

Iceland saw what was happening and hurriedly tried to activate the system. It took a few more tries until it started. The controls all lit up and he immediately began typing an SOS code to pangaea.

“Philipia! I've sent the coordinates! I got a reply! They'll be here soon!”

Philipia wasn't able to hear what he said when she force herself to heal the youth in her arms. Suddenly, her marks began to burn her skin, even her birth mark became swollen red.

Maharlika cried once more, “Philipia stop!”

“Come on Kyoto... Wake up. Wake up!”

Iceland ran towards them and stood at the side and saw something was wrong. He said, his voice trembling, “You haven't been baptized yet...?”

“ah!!!” philipia cried and cried even more blood red tears. She looked down at Kyoto's wound yet not even a small amount of it was healed.

Frustration welled up inside, she took another deep breath and released her marks once more, but before everything appeared, she cried in pain again, this time she vomitted blood.

Iceland kneeled down, “Just stop! You'll kill yourself!”

“I have to! I'm a female leader! This is supposed to be something I can do!”

“Are you going to waste her sacrifice by killing yourself to heal her?! You haven't been baptized! it will backfire on you!”

Philipia finally snapped and sobbed, “Then what am I?! Why am I so...useless! Why did she have to...” philipia choked back the words.

Iceland placed a hand on her shoulder, “it wasn't your fault... it was her own decision” then, he placed a hand on her and closed Kyoto's eyes. Her long eyelashes casting a shadow.

Philipia cried and mourned as she cradle Kyoto in her arms. Her heart wrenching cry echoed around the ship. She hugged the now cold corpse and bury her face on the crooked of her neck, muffling her loud wail, wishing she could take her heart out and remove that throbbing pain.

It was so painful like she was being cut into pieces. They may not have had a lot of time together, but the times they did, they were always smiling and happy. It was one of those times she felt so free.

But now, those happy days will now become a memory, something to reminisce. At this point, she realize, she had never really known or understood Kyoto. Yet the city girl understood her instead.

Iceland also hugged her and rub circles on her back, hoping he could at least bring comfort to her pain. He just met Kyoto today but he can tell that she is a good kid. If he ever had a sister, he would want them to be like Kyoto.

After 3 hours, the rescue team finally arrived, but it was too late.

The abductors took 3 royals, only 2 returned.

End of chapter 20 : Blood redder than maple

Coming Chapter 21 : Silver butterflies

Author has something to say...

Rest in peace Kyoto.

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Chapter 21 : Silver Butterflies

Chapter 21 : Silver Butterflies.

_____

“*Miss philipia... had I been useful?”*

“I liked it when you depended on me...”

“I hear she's almost giving birth”

“Will you... take care of her baby?”

“miss philipia...”

“I lived well...”

“I grew up well...”

|

|

Philipia jolted awake and gasped for air, and sat up from her bed. She looks down at her hands that were trembling from fear. Large beads of sweat slide down from her forehead to her chin as she sat in a daze for a moment.

“Kyoto...” she muttered and muffled her sob, fearing she might wake her uncle and brother up who were asleep in the living room.

It had been 5 days after that incident and 5 days after Kyoto's death. Ever since then, philipia has never had a good sleep. She would often wake up sweating and trembling all over as though she hasn't seen someone die in front of her.

She was still little and her mind was still immature when Perla died so she wasn't affected much, only when she grew up and finally

understood a little did she mourn during her death anniversaries.

The days of sleepless nights and repeating nightmares were when she experienced it for the first time when Kati died. But thanks to it, she grew strong and mentally stable for the things that came after it. But perhaps she had been idle for a long time that she's experiencing it once again.

For her, death isn't an abstract thing anymore. For her, death has become concrete.

Philipia got off the bed and went to the bathroom to wash her face. She looks at herself in the mirror and saw her pale complexion.

Even though she wasn't close to Kyoto, they did make a lot of memories together.

Sighing, she walked out of the bathroom and flinched when she saw Greg leaning by the door frame. “B-brother Greg... You scared for a second there” she said, holding her chest.

Greg raised a brow and examine his sister who looked pale and nervous. “Bad dream?”

Philipia didn't even hide it. She nodded her head.

“It's always the best to drink something warm while talking late at night,” Greg said, gesturing for her to sit. He pulled a chair from the dining table before he went to the kitchen and make hot cocoa with marshmallows.

Philipia waited for a minute before Greg placed a mug in front of her and sat down. “so what's keeping you up pearl?”

Philipia takes the mug and cups it with her hands, feeling that warmth transferring to her palm. “I thought I'd get used to it; the deaths, killings... I thought I'd grown immune, but I couldn't. No matter how many I kill, how many times I've seen things that couldn't be unseen, I still can't get used to it”

Greg takes a sip, listened well, and studies her expression.

“Brother, when Kyoto died in my arms. I felt her warmth dissipate like air, it was as if it was being sucked out until nothing was left, I could save her but I can't. Even though I tried to force it, bleeding from the eyes and nose, not even a little bit of her wound was healed. Brother, what am I? I'm a female leader but what am I?”

A layer of mist gradually formed on her heterochromatic eyes, like she was about to shed tears. However, they never fell. It would have been better if she had cried, with the way she stifled herself makes her feel even worse.

Greg pursed his lips, placed the mug down, and pulled his sister for a hug. He solaces her, “That is not even a question, it is self-doubt of your existence. Pearl, when you were born, the sky was so bright, the rivers and lakes were glistening, the birds were singing. Your birth means a lot to this world. You may have never known, but we always thought you were special. Kyoto's death might not have been written by fate, but it was destined. She did not die for no reason, she died of honor, for you, to protect you. She did not leave this world in vain and if she was here, she would've told you the same.”

He paused for a moment, brushing her bangs back to see her face. At that moment, philipia reminded Greg of when he saw her crying and lost when she played in the forest. And it was at that moment did he promise himself he'll protect her innocence, but unfortunately, he was too late.

“Pearl, even soldiers aren't used to killing. Even I'm still not used to it, whenever my gun shoots down an enemy, I kept thinking about what life he had, or what kind of childhood that person had. I kept thinking about what kind of life I have stolen, if I could listen to it and treasure it, maybe their deaths wouldn't be so meaningless for me.”

Philipia hung her head and stared at her feet that are curled up.

Greg added after kissing her forehead, “You must leave a good memory of the deceased, so whenever you think of her, it would always be the happiest time you had with her. That way, you could respectfully bid them farewell to the other side.”

Greg cups her cheek and faced him, “Got it?”

Philipia's cheeks were squished together, making her look adorable like that of a baby whose cheeks were squished. “Yes brother”

Greg chuckled and ruffled her hue blue hair, “Go to sleep now, or would you like me to sing you to sleep?”

Philipia shakes her head and said, “It's okay, I think I calmed down a little now, thank you brother”

Philipia went back to the bedroom while he washes the mug after it was cleaned off by the two of them. He walked back to his position by the living room with a sleeping pad while Jack slept on the couch that turned to a bed.

As he laid down, Jack spoke. “Is that how you feel nephew?”

Greg snorted and place the blanket over him, and his hands behind his head. “Of course, why couldn't it be?”

Jack opens his eyes and eyed Greg who's lips are formed into a small arch, “How weird, I remember back then how you killed those rebels. They were no mercy on them”

That time, Greg and Martial had experienced their first excursion to the south part of their country where a growing rebellion is surging. They indiscriminately kill people and even execute people in public if they don't agree with one another. This case had caught Kati's attention and sent the two of them, including Jack.

When they arrived, they were just in time for another village massacre. And before the rebels could succeed, Martial and Greg had wiped them all in mere seconds.

Jack stood at the side and watched as Martial gracefully and cleanly kill his enemies without batting an eye. Whilst Greg was more chaotic and more violent, repeatedly he'd used his bare hands to snap someone's neck, bite them with his teeth, stab them with their weapon, and even gauge their eyes.

After that short battle, Martial immaculately took his kill and place

them neatly on the ground to present it to him like it was an everyday thing—even though it was their first time killing— it was still nice to look at. On the other hand, Greg hanged, impaled, decapitated, slashes on their body, their organs cut open for everyone to see, and even burnt his enemies alive.

Everyone, except Martial, shuddered and threw up upon seeing his ‘proud’ work.

Greg chuckled and opened his eyes, glancing at the side at his uncle. “At that time, it was just so addicting. But I'm not a monster, chill. It was just the adrenaline kicking in.”

Jack highly doubted that. But even so, it doesn't matter. Everyone in their family had at least killed someone, either brutally or humane.

“But uncle, if you think about it. I'm not the one who is brutal here.”

Jack glance at Greg who smirked. “What do you mean?” he asks.

“You may have seen Martial kill like a prince. But have you seen him kill in rage mode? Like when he goes apeshit?”

Jack shakes his head and Greg scoffed. “Of course you don't, dude. Martial only killed once in rage mode.”

“What happened?”

Greg shrugs. “He just went crazy one day and... Killed those remaining hidden rebels.”

Even if Jack tries to pry for more information, Greg had already shifted his position. His back facing him. So he lays back down and gazed at the ceiling.

The next day. Philipia went to school and entered the classroom with her classmates that's been reduced to more than half after its security system had been disabled.

On that day, not only was the city in chaos but the school had been

attacked by a few terrorists who disagree with the Academy and its rules. Many of the students were killed, the leaders who were present were the ones who were able to stop them and close the rates and lend a hand to the female academy.

Philipia scanned around the room and saw many flower vases that almost occupied the whole desks.

South stared at the seat in front of him in a daze before he felt her gaze on him. “Hey there,” he greeted with a weary smile. Philipia walked closer and noticed he had a cast on his right arm.

“This...”

South looks down on his casted right arm and chuckled, “I got careless, I didn't think someone would be able to attack me from behind unnoticed. I guess I've been a leader who had been idle for too long.”

Philipia nodded and sat down next to him which is also an empty seat. She glances at the vase on it and softens her eyes. “Me too... I lost someone dear to me because I've been idle as well.”

South laughed bitterly, “Does that mean we need another war to stimulate our skills again? Sounds fun...”

Just then, Japan, China, Spain, and America arrived. They too scanned the classroom before taking their seat. Philipia got up, returned the chair to its place, and went to her seat.

America peers at her. “Hey, are you okay?”

“Shouldn't I be asking you that instead?”

China closed his eyes and held his right arm that has a bandage whilst America has one around his neck and stomach. “Hahaha, it's fine... I'm fine.”

The day went gloomy. There wasn't much class and they had to skip a few subjects because five of their teachers were also killed.

When Third Reich entered, he was unfazed by the gloomy

atmosphere and continued like any other normal day. He places his book on the desk and faces the class where most were injured, wearing bandages.

“My, my, look at this. Turn your frowns upside down.”

South scowled at him and said. “Fuck you asshole, why don't you just shut the fuck up and go back to whatever War hole you came through.”

Third Reich examined south Korea with a smile that doesn't look like a smile, but a smile that looks cold and emotionless. But south wasn't scared, he was too tired and in pain to be scared.

Third Reich sighed and shrug helplessly, “Alright no need to be so fierce. I know that we've all lost a lot of our friends and colleagues but now is not the time to be depressed.”

Before he could continue, the speaker announced. “Attention all students, please proceed to the school hall in respect of our departed students and teachers. I repeat...”

Third Reich points to the speaker and said, “Well looks like we are all being summoned for a funeral assembly.”

Everyone soon got up and walked out of their classrooms towards the school hall.

As soon as they entered, they saw at the stage where all the pictures of the departed students and teachers, as well as staff. Their parents were all over there, weeping and crying for their loss.

Philipia pause and examined the place where it was shrouded by a depressing air.

The stage had been designed with a few flowers often used for funerals, some of them were even lighting up a candle and placed it on the deceased picture.

“It's sad isn't it?” Arabia comments, standing beside philipia whose eyes had a layer of water that looks like it's on the verge of spilling.

“Hey... I'm sorry about what happened, about Kyoto.”

Philipia hurriedly wipes her eyes that were about to spill tears, “You should say that to J... It was his sister whom he lost, I was just the one who indirectly killed her.”

“Whose death is who's fault doesn't matter anymore at this time. Everyone is grieving philipia, you're not alone.”

When the assembly was about to start, all the students went to their line. While the principal was talking, philipia roamed her eyes around the hall and saw a little girl sitting alone while carrying her brother's picture. She looked small and weak, and alone. She must be the only living relative.

When the principal was done, everyone began to wail. The whole hall was filled with grief and woes. The school had promised to compensate everyone and guarantee to give them a lifetime of dividends as well as hand the diploma of the students and write them as graduates of Pangaea Academy.

Russia glance at the stage and muttered under his breath. “In the land of freedom, you pledge to sacrifice for the leaders...” he paused for a moment and turn to look at his sunshine speaking with a little girl who sits alone, “While the leaders, sacrifice for you...”

Philipia stooped before the little girl who looked conspicuous in the hall. She sat on a chair that her small little legs would dangle and swing back and forth, she hugs the portrait of her brother that was the same size of her body.

“Hello little girl, how are you?”

The little girl looked up, “Greetings leader, my name is maia.”

Maia was about to hop off to bow with her black dress, but philipia stopped her and she remained seated. “It's okay maia. Today is a very sad day, are you with someone? An Auntie? Or perhaps an uncle? Where are your parents?”

Maia answered each one truthfully with her big green eyes, “I have no Auntie or uncle, and our parents died of an accident.”

Philipia suddenly felt like an idiot but she pats the brunette hair, “I see. It must've been hard on you.”

Maia shakes her head, “Bro-bro told me that I shouldn't be sad because bro-bro and our parents are in a better place where they will not get hurt.”

“Even so, don't you miss them?”

Maia pursed her lips, “Well... I do but I know they're watching over me.”

“Then, when you go home, you don't have anyone else with you?”

Maia shakes her head, “Leader, will maia be alone?”

Those words seemed to have cut through philipia's heart and she couldn't help but bite her lower lip and hold her tears back. “Then, will you show me where you live? Perhaps I can help you.”

Maia perks up and studied the female leader in front of her. “What do you mean leader?”

Philipia looks around the hall that was still filled with people and students, “I'm saying... if there's no one to be with you, would you like to be with me?”

There was silence between the two, only their similar round eyes were staring onto each other. After a moment, maia smiled brightly, “I get what the leader is saying, but maia will be fine by herself. I may not look like it but I do the house chores and house expenses by myself. Bro-bro is the one who goes to school and works while I do the rest. Even if maia will be alone, maia won't be sad or lonely. But thank you, leader, for thinking about maia.”

Maia soon left along with the other families with whom she is close with. She turns around once more and waved with a bright smile towards philipia.

Brazil stood beside her, “Kids right? They're cute and innocent and you just want nothing but to protect them.”

“Was that what you felt towards Brasilia?”

Mexico chuckled, his face showing that he's thinking of something nostalgic. “When Brasilia was first given to me, I was clueless and thought of giving him away to someone else many times. But I didn't even realize that he was already old enough to talk and think and speak for himself when I was finally committed to giving him to a family. Unexpectedly, that kid turned my life around. I can no longer imagine my life without my son.”

Philipia studied his expression and couldn't help but smile. She could imagine how wonderful and precious those memories of him and Brasilia were.

Brazil also added, “Anyways, I wouldn't have my son without that strange woman with the veil.”

Philipia turns to Brazil who already left after a short pat on her shoulder. She watched his figure slip through the crowded hall and disappear.

Now that Brazil had mentioned it, she wondered if that veiled woman could be armageddon. And speaking of armageddon, back when she fought with the fallen leader, he mentioned to her about someone's descendant and his apparent hatred for her.

Maharalika, who had been quiet spoke. “You think you could be Armageddon's descendant?”

‘*Mn... At least that's what I think but I still have to make sure. I'll have to talk to tito and brother Greg about it later*.’

Whilst she was conversing with maharlika in her head. Russia came over quietly and studied her dazed expression, standing conspicuously at the crowd where most parents and relatives stood wearing black and white mourning clothes. Her green color palette autumn uniform stood out among the monotonous color.

“I've caught the man,” he said.

Philipia snaps back and faced Russia who stood one and a half heads taller beside her. “Yes?”

Russia repeats, “I caught the man, the man who abducted you, Iceland, and that city leader Kyoto.”

Unexpectedly, her reaction was dull and normal, Russia had been expecting to see hatred and anger so he was surprised. His sunshine only showed a weary and exhausted look. “Don't you want to see that man and punish him? J wanted to go.”

Philipia nodded and wasn't even surprised, “He has every right to do so whilst I'm only an outsider.”

“Don't say that, You meant a lot for J and Kyoto.” Philipia answered back, changing the topic which Russia didn't intrude.

“That man's name was Semenov. He's a dirty Russian mafia running around the globe to get away with the cops, the place he took you in was one of his private villas or escape sanctuary in case his enemies or people who covet his riches start to hunt him down.”

“Why did that fallen leader work for him?”

Russia chuckled coldly, his gaze could drill a hole. “back then, when his country was occupied by Mr. Pangaea, he was then ordered to serve his ancestors. Semenov's ancestors used to be Town leaders, but because of bad blood between the kin, they dispersed and created a few branches on their own before Semenov was born and decided to be a good-for-nothing mafia. Pecleos— the fallen leader— was then given to him by the main family as some sort of agreement that he would no longer cause any trouble for them and leave. After that, he did fucked up shits, and here we are...”

Russia suddenly added, “also, did you know? Pecleos was once the country of mercy?”

This new information was a surprise for philipia, so she shakes her head in response.

Russia clarified, “Apparently he was a very good leader, even his people were real saints that were so good, others could take advantage of, ironic isn't it?”

Philipia looks down and muttered, “We are the third party,

whatever may have happened to him, we can't judge him base on a none solid info.”

Russia agreed, “you're right, I was too unjustly. By the way, how did you know it was a none solid information?”

“History and fallen leaders records were supposed to be taboo. Also” she placed her hands behind her back, “You curse when you're confident.”

Russia was taken aback and blinked a few times trying to filter what she meant. “I... I do?”

Philipia nodded, “Yes. You do.”

She left immediately after saying that, leaving the dumbfounded Russia who thinks about his habit of cursing, especially in his language that is so crispy it could defeat a fried chicken.

Philipia walks back to the academy where it looked deserted. On that day when the security was down, the whole campus had been stained with blood and corpses loitering around. But thanks to the people who clean the place everyday, it was as if that time didn't happen.

“You're walking like a headless chicken”

Philipia looks up to see Ireland carrying a moving box by his hip and arm. “Ireland...”

“Howya” he responds with a wink, “I haven't seen you around lately, I don't see you in your old position by the central garden under the tree.”

“Oh, I tend to go home immediately and take a different route when walking around the school.”

Ireland chuckled, “Avoiding these shenanigans? The harem?”

Philipia didn't reply and merely smiled.

Ireland raised a brow, “Bejesus... Philipia you finally get what I

mean when I say ‘harem?’...”

Philipia nodded.

Ireland cried an even more surprised tone. “Jaysus! So? How does it feel?”

“Feel?” philipia stops for a moment and thinks, “Doesn't feel natural, doesn't feel right, nor wrong either. It just feels... Unreal.” then she realized her words and looked at Ireland's expression who is pouting. She had recalled he had confessed to her and that his feelings were still the same even now. Saying it feels unreal sounds a bit insensitive for him.

“Ah! I didn't mean it that way it's just...”

Ireland suddenly laughed, “Relax, relax. You don't have to be so worried. I'm just glad you get to understand yourself in more depths now.”

Philipia sighed in relief, “Is that so? I'm glad. It's just that, after understanding everything, I'm still a bit overwhelmed from time to time and sometimes, I'd rather avoid it— although I don't mean it in a negative way.”

“Hahaha! I know, I know.”

Philipia smiles before she noticed the moving box he's carrying, “That...?”

“oh? This? Well, I'm leaving the school for now” Ireland glances at the moving box in his hands, “Now that the country is facing a crisis, I think it's time for me to go back home and deal with mine. After the losses, I'm sure there won't be any classes for a while not until next year after two months.”

“I see...” frankly, philipia felt a bit sadden of Ireland's departure, it reminded her of Norway. After she had lost her phone, she had also lost a few numbers, including his, consequently she wasn't able to text him frequently like she always does.

“Scotland is also leaving, but I'm not sure where he is now but I

guarantee he'll come to you.” he winked at the end.

Philipia chuckled and nodded, “take care Ireland. Please tell me when you'll be leaving so I can see you off.”

“Great! Hahaha! Now I won't regret anything. Oh! And, if you want to discuss with me about ‘that’ and ‘that place’ I'm always online and free.”

After that, philipia walked inside the Academy and bumped into Canada and NZ walking together.

NZ saw her first and waved, “Philipi--”

“Mappplleeee syrruppp!!!”

Philipia swiftly avoided a hug that was about to tackle her by stepping to the side. NZ saw it happen and couldn't help but laugh, “Canada, can't you be more subtle?”

Canada whined as he stomps his feet, “But my sincere feelings gets me overwhelmed sometimes that I can't help but give her a hug and kiss her passionately!”

Philipia clears her throat to throw that awkward feeling when he confessed. Canada would often confess with his heart out like he always does but he is unaware that the female leader is now aware of his words.

NZ sighs at his lovestruck older brother, “Philipia, are you still going to stay here?”

Philipia nodded.

Canada frowns and pouts, “If maple syrup is staying then I'm staying!”

“Dad is gonna get you himself. You'll only embarrassed yourself in front of philipia.”

Canada cried, “But why do we have to leave!? We kicked those enemy's butts! Even Australia released his snake!”

“It's not about that. It's about how the school suffered a heavy loss and how it'll take time to rebuild it and the vacant slots.”

Canada clicked his tongue in annoyance, “Damned father.” he then faced philipia with a sweet and innocent look, “My maple syrup that is the most beautiful woman on earth.”

Philipia, “…”

Canada continued, “I will be gone only for a few months, just think of it as an early winter vacation, I'll be back by next year.”

As he was about to hug her, NZ immediately grab the back of his collar and pulled him to the opposite side of the hallway. He smiled at philipia, “Take care of yourself philipia”

Philipia responds, “You too...”

As they left, philipia continued walking towards the north wing garden.

“Heya philips” Ukraine greeted while holding a rake.

Finland, Estonia, and Greece were also present.

“Hello Ukraine, how are the sunflowers?” she asked.

Ukraine responds cheerfully, “They're fine! Sunflowers aren't hard to produce.”

Greece rolled his eyes. “Even so, you're part of this club, you haven't been helping and we even took after your shift when you were in the hospital.”

Finland chides, “Weren't you the one who was insistent in taking care of them?”

Greece stomps his feet angrily, “W-what?! What'd you say?! As if I was, I was simply worried you useless brats wouldn't be able to tend the sunflowers properly!”

Estonia then puffs his cheeks, “We're not brats! You just want

sweetheart to praise you! You selfish prick!”

Greece gritted his teeth, “Who said I wanted her praise? She can have her compliments to herself see if I care! Or perhaps you're the one who's desperate for her praise, how pathetic Estonia!”

Estonia points towards the other direction and angrily spout, “You!... You—!!!”

Greece smiled condescendingly and scoffed at foolish Estonia pointing at the wrong way while still trying to defend himself. Finland sighed and change his position so he's pointing directly at Greece who ignored him and continued cleaning the garden with a rake, gathering the red maple leaves in one place while Finland used a shovel to transfer it to a trash bin.

“Our members are so useless right Philips? Should we go ahead and change them?” Ukraine suggested, ignoring the looks of disbelief from the others behind him.

“No need. I'm the one who had been useless.”

Estonia hurriedly replied, “Sweetheart doesn't need to be so humble! To be honest, we haven't done much either and the sunflowers don't need 24/7 surveillance.”

Greece disagreed, “What do you mean? Those sunflowers are special! They are a special breed that attracts special bees!”

Estonia mocks him and mimics a sock puppet with his hands while Greece talks, “Keep talking! You're already caught! Those sunflowers are ordinary I can guarantee it!”

Ukraine sighs and faced them, “Guys will you shut up and just work?”

“Oh yeah? Guarantee what? With your blind eyes? Convince me otherwise if you can see!”

Philipia glanced at Estonia's cloudy eyes and imagined how radiant and beautiful it must be if it was restored.

At that moment, philipia looks down at her hands and back to the group who's still arguing. She muttered. “I need to... I need to be baptized...”

As she said that, she turned to her heel and made a run for it, leaving the group of leaders dumbfounded.

Estonia was clueless why it suddenly became quiet, “What? What happened? Wait. Why can't I hear sweethearts breathing? Did she leave?”

Finland slowly turned his head to Estonia with a weirded-out expression, “You can hear her breathing? Do you listen to it? What the hell Estin!”

Philipia ran around the campus and back to the school hall, looking for jack to discuss her baptism. He did promise to baptize her, and if only she was baptized way early then maybe she could've saved Kyoto.

When she couldn't find him, she ran back to the teacher's dorm and saw Jack walking with Greg and Cosmos.

“Tito!” she yelled and the three men stopped at the same time to glance back at the female running towards their way.

“Shooting star, there you are, I've been looking for you, Iran had also been looking for you,” cosmos said.

Jack then answered, “Is there something wrong niece?”

Philipia took a few seconds to catch her breath. Showing them a stop sign, telling them to wait.

Greg finds it comical and hands her his energy drink, “Here.”

Philipia nodded as thanks and gulps down the energy drink.

“You need to exercise a lot more now pearl.”

After downing the whole drink, philipia declared, “I'd like to be baptized!”

Jack blinks a few times, “What?”

Greg didn't think too much about it and affirm. “True, you are at the right decade age to get your last baptism.”

Jack probed, “So you also don't know?”

The three of them glanced at him with a clueless expression. “What is it that should be known?” cosmos asked, also unaware.

Because country leaders can only be baptized in their country and Greg was baptized here! And by Pangaea himself as well!

Jack screamed in his head. He sighed and gesture the three of them to follow him back to the dorm.

When they entered, Jack closed the door and faced the three. “So what's up?” Greg asked.

Jack looks at philipia and asked, “Do you not know niece?”

“Know what tito?”

“That leaders can only be baptized in their country?”

These three youths glance at each other before shaking their heads.

Jack sighed and explained, “Country leaders can be baptized in their country while continent leaders can be baptized anywhere.”

It took a few seconds before they process and understand what he meant. Greg then points himself with trembling hands, “T-then I'm... I'm...”

Jack nods, confirming his assumption. “Yes Greg, you're a continent leader”

“HOLY FUCK! WHAT THE FUCK?! WHAT THE HELL?! WHY THE FUCK WAS I NOT TOLD?!” Greg exclaimed, holding his head and pacing back and forth in the living room.

Cosmos mimics an explosion and said flatly, “Mind blown”

Philipia was also reckoning her head about this sudden news. Even though she had assumptions, she dares not believe it unless there is proof. Unconsciously, she covered her yellow eye and took a deep breath.

Greg suddenly jerked up when an idea sprouted. He swiftly turned back and gawked at his uncle, “Then you are also a... A....”

Jack shakes his head, “I'm a country leader, that I am sure.”

“Then whose side of the family did this continent blood came from?!”

Philipia perked up and stared at jack with a probing look, “Is it... Mama?”

Greg, “Whatttttttttt??????”

Maharlika, “Whatttttttttt??????”

Cosmos, “…”

Philipia asked again, almost certain. “She is, isn't it? Mama is a continent leader.”

“Half” he corrected, “Your mother was either a half or part continent leader.”

Greg then inquired, “Then why does mama doesn't have a birthmark? I can clearly remember when we were little, she showered with us at the lake she had no birthmark!”

Greg was the one who liked to climb on his parent's back. He would often climb martial's back as well, but it all stopped when he reached a certain age where he doesn't think like a little boy anymore. The explanation why he can still remember such a thing is because of his strong memory, both he and martial are gifted in terms of memorization.

Cosmos explained instead, “There are many reasons why a leader could lose a birthmark, one is the accordance and rejection of the land and citizens, and the other is the lack of baptism. It could be

that your mother was never baptized even when she was born.”

“So you're saying grandma didn't know she's a leader? She didn't know mama was a leader? I find that impossible to believe.” Greg argues.

“Maybe she did know, or maybe she just didn't want to, perhaps there's a reason to it we can't just assume.” philipia said, calming herself and sat down on the couch.

Greg groans, “So now what? Now we know we're somehow related to Mr. Pangaea and that we're continent leaders— but wait, if mama is a leader, does that mean, the relatives we had from her side were all leaders? Grandma was also a leader?!”

Cosmos then said, “Think about it, what is unique and special from your mother's side of the family?”

Jack, who had been silent, answered. “Yellow eyes. Perla's mother also had yellow eyes.”

“Then you're from the main family, it's so obvious.” Cosmos expressed.

Greg glance at philipia and back to himself. He gaped at his hands, arm then clasped his face, “I have Armageddon's blood in me? I have her... Blood?” after that, he sang “Is this real life? Is this just fantasy?”

Jack irritatingly spout, “Alright Greg, shut up! Now that both of you finally found out you're continent leaders, what do you plan to do?”

Greg looks at him and said, “What do you mean? What else is there to do? Being a relative to a continent leader is already awesome, there's not much else other than an added appeal.”

Jack sighed and felt no hope for his nephew, he then looks at philipia. “What about you niece? Do you still want to be baptized?”

Philipia looks up and nodded, “I don't want to feel powerless anymore. If I was born like this, there must've been a reason.”

Jack concedes and says, “alright... Then, how about we do it at night? Let's be subtle and keep it a secret so that word you're a continent leader doesn't get out. We don't want so much attention on us, especially not from Mr. Pangaea.”

“why not?” Greg asked, “He baptized me himself, surely he must've known or found out I'm his relative, he doesn't even pay attention to me.”

Jack turns to the foolish Greg, “That fact that he won't even let you go home before already states his motive.”

Greg's jaw drop, “Holy shit... You're right.”

Jack shakes his head helplessly then looked back at philipia, “Anyways, what do you think?”

Philipia didn't mind and replied, “Sure.”

Cosmos then suggested, “Why not do it at the school pond? It's been closed off anyway.”

“Great idea, like that wouldn't get anyone's attention once her spirit animal comes.” Greg sarcastically states.

Greg's remark did make sense so they scratched out the pond and went for the lake instead.

Philipia then asked. “Brother, what did you mean, my spirit animal?”

“Oh, that?”

When a leader gets baptized, their spirit animal will come to greet them. Once they form a bond during the baptism, the leader may have a deeper connection with it and use it as a messenger or transportation.

Once it was explained, philipia then asked. “What is your spirit animal brother?”

Greg coughed and rub his nose, hesitating to answer honestly or

not. “Errr... Mine is a Carabao.”

Jack raised a brow, “Why are you embarrassed to tell? A carabao suits you, it symbolizes strength.”

Greg scoffed and rolled his eyes, “Yeah right. Imagine what happened when I was baptized. The whole place was filled with it.” after that, he left the dorm.

Cosmos looked at philipia and place a hand on her shoulder, “I'll be there in your baptism—Also, nobody asked me but my spirit animal is a Vantablack bird, just saying.” after that, he turns to his heel and left, and gently closed the door behind him.

Philipia then turns to Jack yet she didn't say anything, but her curious expression says it all. Jack chuckled and started rolling his sleeves, “My spirit animal is a crocodile. Kati's spirit animal was a golden-crowned flying fox.”

Philipia was awed and imagined her father talking with a giant-looking bat. Then jack added, “You can't imagine how horrifying it was on his baptism, I thought hell's gate was opened by accident.”

“Aren't they herbivores?”

Jack chuckled, “Yeah, but now I'm not sure if they still exist, or perhaps they're now an endangered species since Kati...”

He didn't even need to continue when philipia hung her head and remained quiet. “I'm gonna go and take a walk.”

“Sure, I'll call you when it's time to eat. There are no classes anyway so you can eat your lunch here.”

Philipia nodded and left the room.

As she strolls back to the Academy, she saw Egypt and Nepal crouching down by the garden. Egypt held a notebook and a pencil, sketching the flower that bloomed during autumn whilst Nepal crouched beside him, watching him do his work.

Suddenly, Egypt perks up and turns towards her direction as though

he felt some sort of a signal. He beamed and called, “Anuket! What are you standing there for? Come here.”

“What are you doing?” she asked and crouched beside him.

“Sketching, did you know this flower is called the Queen of poison? It's a type of toxic plant named wolfsbane flower. Just brushing against it can lead to death, it can slow your heart rate, and bam! Dead.” Egypt dramatically explained with expressions and hand gestures.

Nepal simply nodded at the side, his eyes focused entirely on the female.

Philipia hummed in acknowledgment, “I see... But why are you interested in poison all of a sudden?”

Egypt tsks— and said, “Not just poison, all types of herb and medicines from plants, I'm planning to study. I realize I have a knack to become a herbalist.”

“That's nice.”

“what about you anuket? What do you want to become?”

Philipia smiled and touched the flower which made the two leaders flinch but then realize that poison and such don't affect female leaders. “A soldier. But now I don't know what I want to be, perhaps I'm still a little lost and confuse.”

Egypt grins and pats her head, “Don't worry Anuket, you have time. Literally”

Philipia chuckled and suddenly remembered, “Oh, if you don't mind me asking. What was your spirit animal?”

Egypt answered truthfully while he resumed sketching, “A desert Lynx.”

Nepal also answered, “A Rhino.”

“Are you going to get baptized now? Or are you already baptized?”

Egypt asked casually, but it took philipia by surprise.

However, she still answered. “I'm going to be baptized... Later.”

Egypt replied, “Alright, we'll go. I'm sure you'd want an amazing leader like me.”

Philipia and Nepal glance at each other. Nepal already had an understanding look and didn't bother to pry her any more questions which she appreciated. Even so, she said. “Egypt, I'll be baptized here...”

“Okay”

Philipia, “…”

Maharlika suddenly said, “Does he also not know? Or is he simply stupid?”

Philipia enunciated carefully. “Only a continent leader can be baptized here...”

“I know, and you are worthy so it's not a problem or an issue for me. Don't worry Anuket, my lips are sealed.”

One of the reasons why it didn't even take a day for her to tell the truth to them was because she trusts them. Although she may have been naive, she's not entirely stupid.

Philipia couldn't help but smile and nod, “Then, come to the school lake later at midnight...”

Egypt paused from sketching and faced the female leader, “But make sure not to carelessly say that next time alright? Not everyone is as trustworthy as me. And not everyone gets the honor to have their baptism visited by me”

Philipia giggled and stood up, “Yes. Thank you. Egypt, Nepal.”

After that, she immediately turns to her heel and went upstairs to her classroom to retrieve her bag.

Egypt sighs contentedly, “They grow up so fast.” he said, like a parent who saw their child graduate college.

After the “Mnn.” Nepal added, “She matured a lot now.”

The hall was empty and quiet, each of her footsteps reverberates.

Maharalika curiosily asked, “Why did you easily tell them? Why trust so easily?”

‘*Maharlika, you've been living in my head for so long you still don't know the term of Womans intuition?*’

“Women what?”

‘*Intuition. Mama said the same thing long ago. At first, I didn't get it but after going through so much did I finally understood what she said, and besides. Egypt and Nepal trust me, so I trust them too.*’

Maharlika can only sigh, “Silly girl. Just make sure to deal with the consequence yourself and not others.”

‘*Yes.*’

While speaking with her alter in her head, philipia arrived at her classroom and saw J sitting on his desk looking a bit lost.

Quietly, she walks in and called. “Hey J...”

Japan replied dazedly. “Hmm?”

Philipia took a seat in her chair and faced Japan, “Did you go to...” he voice fades.

When philipia arrived, she immediately saw the bloodstain on his sleeves and hands that had gone dry. Instantly, she understood that Japan came back from Russia's country and dealt with the man who abducted them.

Philipia felt her heart tighten. She called again, her voice trembling a little. “J... I wish I had the right words to say, I wish I could take your pain away, I wish I could've saved her, I wish I could heal the

hole in your heart J. I wish I could...”

Japan's eyes quivered and slowly turn his head to look at philipia holding back her tears. He then sighed heavily, letting his head drop, the melancholy expression he had, broke and he sniffled quietly.

“No matter how much I punched the guy, beat him, choke him, stab him, and even skin him alive. Kyoto will never come back,” he said between his heavy sobbing.

The room was empty but it was occupied by two leaders. One sat at the first row, the other sat at the third row. They both quietly let out their tears yet it was loud enough to break the silence. As the autumn sunset peers through the open window, their shadows loom over the wall giving that lonely and destitute feeling.

The what-ifs can only be said but can't be done. Once the ifs are made, there's no replay or restart.

Incapable of saving, incapable of helping.

They felt sad, for themselves, and for everyone. Philipia has almost forgotten her father's words, that time doesn't wait for everyone, even for leaders.

Friends leave, love ones leave. This world won't stop until it reached its limit.

“It was her choice philipia, even if I was the one there with you, I'd do the same...” Japan then stood up and kissed Philipia's forehead. “Thanks for staying with me. I still have to go back home.”

Philipia finally looked up, her red-rimmed eyes stared intently at the man. For a second, something inside Japan blossom and he felt happy and sad.

Happy that philipia's eyes only contain him, but sad because she's crying and not because of him.

“The raccoons will probably go extinct, I have to deal with it personally. It's the least I could do for her,” he explained, tucking a

strand of her hair behind her ear with affectionate eyes.

Philipia asked, “Racoon...?”

As she expected, Japan answered, “Kyoto's spirit animal. Once a leader dies, their spirit animal will either go extinct or be an endangered species. Either way, it's never good news.”

She nodded and said, “Okay... Take care.”

“I'll be back” Japan looks down at his hand and sleeves that now have bloodstains, it made him recall when he pulled philipia out of the blood-red water. Japan shuddered and felt an ache in his heart, he hurriedly said, “Don't miss me too much.” and left.

Philipia was the only one left in the classroom and stayed there for a bit, she wipes her face and tear-stained eyes and packs up her book and notebooks.

That night, philipia, Jack, Greg, and cosmos went to the lake.

Jack was first surprised when he saw Egypt and Nepal there but when he learned from philipia the reason, he reluctantly consents.

Egypt took a deep breath and sneezed, “A good time to be baptized indeed” and shuddered at the end, pulling his jacket even closer, hoping he could make himself into a burrito.

Nepal immediately hands him a tissue which he takes and blows his nose.

Jack looks around the lake and appreciated the scenery. “I don't think I've been in this part of the school”

Greg lights up a cigar and blows the smoke, “Back then, I use to bring the girls here and I'll bang them.”

Everyone soon spoke their disgust.

Egypt, “Disgusting peasants!”

Nepal, “…hm”

Cosmos, “Won't it be too obvious?”

Jack, “Fucking hell Greg. Shut the fuck up will you?”

Maharlika, “Hard to imagine he's your brother”

Philipia, “…”

Greg laughed at their reactions and couldn't help but give them a middle finger—except philipia.

Egypt sighs, “So uncultered” he mumbled, “Anyways, it's so cold, are you sure you can baptize her here?”

Jack shakes his head and took off his clothes and stood half-naked. “It's not that cold, you weaklings aren't that tough after all.”

Egypt pouts and scrunched his brows, “How dare he... Can't it be just because I live in a very hot and humid place? And doesn't he live in a hot and humid place as well?”

Nepal nodded.

Egypt grumbled, “I know right? These peasants.”

When philipia saw jack take off his shirt she asked, “Tito, why are you removing your shirt?”

Jack did not reply and merely gesture to her to follow him to the lake. Philipia hesitated for a moment.

Greg then spoke, “It'd be best to remove your thick jacket too, it'll be easier.”

Philipia obeyed Greg's advice and removed her jacket, revealing her in a white, long-sleeved dress that reaches her knees.

Jack stopped when the water reached his chest, “You ready?”

When she touched the water, she shivered at first but slowly got used to it when half of her body was submerged in the water. “Yeah... But, what should I do?”

Jack then reaches out and held her hand underwater. The level then reached philipia's neck. Jack held himself back from laughing after seeing her struggling expression, he forgot he's a head taller than her so he walked a few steps to the shallow area.

“Just close your eyes and listen to my voice.”

Philipia then closed her eyes and let her uncle do his thing.

Jack turns to look at Greg who takes out a cigar capsule and smokes it out. He takes off his shoes and jacket and stood by the lake, his marks then start to materialize on his skin.

That light green color that glows brightly through his white shirt, were thumping with his heartbeat.

Egypt and Nepal who were watching couldn't help but hold their breath, sensing that something unbelievable will happen if they disturb their focus.

Only cosmos, behind his helmet, remained unfazed. He had seen something much more dazzling before and that was when a planet leader was baptized. At that time, the whole planet would glow and show its hidden marks. Like a brightly lit star that ignited in the void.

As soon as the marks reached his feet, they started to connect with the marks on the ground then towards the water to where jack and philipia stood.

Philipia still had her eyes closed but her marks automatically showed itself and connected with Greg. Only jack was unaffected, he is, after all, a country leader. This land does not acknowledge him as their master.

Once the connection was done, Greg gave an ok sign to jack.

“Niece, hold your breath for as long as you can.”

Philipia didn't reply, she was already in a trance when the marks started to connect to her. But jack continued and recited, “Philipia, I now baptize you in the name of Tethyria. For your responsibility

and duty as a leader and the gift of everlasting commitment and promise of upholding the title of leadership forever. Do you accept?"

"... Yes"

As soon as she answered, Greg flinched back and detached himself from the marks. "Fuck! What the hell, it burns!"

Jack also felt the burning sensation and couldn't hold on to philipia and released her. She fell backwards and the moment her whole body plunged. The whole lake, the ground, and even the trees revealed their marks.

Cosmos's eyes widen that he couldn't help but turn his helmet off and remove it. The color of hue blue, green, yellow, and red were shifting between each heartbeat. The colors reflected on his starry eyes like the galaxy was thrown with a canvas of rainbow.

Egypt and Nepal were also surprised by the turn of events and can only gawk at the scenery before them.

Jack cried out in pain when he felt like he was being boiled alive, "Greg! What the hell happened?!"

Greg was also confused and tries to connect his marks once more but was rejected, "I don't know! I can't connect with her marks!"

Jack looks back to the place where philipia is floating underwater. Although it was midnight and the lake is supposed to be dark, but thanks to the marks, it seemed to have its natural lighting that makes it crystal clear on what was underneath the water.

He can even see the fishes and rocks glowing along.

Cosmos steps forward, his face showing bewilderment and awe. Even so, he still replied, "She's trying to baptize herself independently."

All men simultaneously looked at cosmos who ignored them, he was too occupied admiring the land marks to care.

Greg asked, “Baptize independently? That's possible?!”

“It is... But it rarely happens. It only does when the land truly does acknowledge her as their only master.”

Jack cried once more when the boiling pain kept increasing, “She will drown if I don't pull her out!”

Cosmos finally faces him and yelled, a rare stubborn and alarm expression showed on his face, “Don't! Don't pull her out! She'll be fine! If you force to pull her out the consequences will be on her, it will fireback on her!”

Jack hesitated but ran out of the water, traces of aggressive marks still stick to his lower body and his stomach. Jack hissed, “It felt like I was boiled alive.”

Egypt worriedly asked, “What about anuket?”

Cosmos answered, “She'll be fine” trust me.

He thought of the last one. After all, he had just recalled the same scenery before.

Underneath the water, philipia wasn't sinking but stayed in place. The ends of the marks of the water were caressing her cheek, reaching out to the tips of her fingers and toes.

The scene was similar to when you draw a stick man on a plastic and pour a small amount of water on it, then wait for it to remove itself from the surface before it moves as if it was alive.

Philipia felt weightless and euphoric and more sensitive to light, color, sound, touch, taste, and smell. She can hear her muffled beating heart that goes faster by the minute. She felt like a layer of her soul was peeled and a bright new one emerged.

When she opened her eyes, it was as if there was a strong gale, the marks were pushed back.

Greg comments, covering his eyes from the sudden brightness, “Well, there goes being subtle.”

Suddenly, silver transparent butterfly started appearing one by one until they all came in groups like a school of anchovies flying right above them.

Egypt exclaimed, “Oh. My. Ra!”

Nepal reaches out and a silver butterfly rested on his finger, “Glasswing butterfly”

“Greta Oto” cosmos muttered and a butterfly brushed on his cheek and left traces of silver dust.

Greg chuckled and gawked at the butterflies circling around the surface of the water where philipia is underneath.

“Her spirit animal really suits her and her personality.” he said.

The men above waited for a while before the light disappeared and the place calmed down.

When the lake returned to it's dark color, the only light that can give in the dark autumn night was the butterflies with their wings containing bioluminescent powder. The silver lights were dancing around like fireflies but even brighter and more powerful.

Philipia suddenly came out of the water and gasped for air. The butterflies were surprised at first and scattered away but quickly gathered around her, settling on her cheek, face, nose, and even lips, like they had just found their long lost mother.

It reminded Nepal of the little mermaid when she came out of the water after gaining her legs. It was a really breathtaking moment.

Unexpectedly, philipia fell back again and there was a large splash of water.

Jack immediately ran back to the lake, not even flinching despite that traumatic boiling effect from earlier.

He carried her back and shake her awake, “Niece? Philipia? Hey, hey... Wake up.”

Philipia coughed out the excess water and heaves heavily, catching for air.

Everyone sighed in relief. Egypt then said, “Since we're done, let's go back before someone will co--”

Everyone noticed his paused and saw him looking behind them with a you-caught-me expression.

Jack can already tell, but he still slowly looked back and saw Malaysia, Indonesia, Estonia, and Poland looking dumbfounded. The ice cream that Poland was holding fell from his hand.

Estonia didn't know what was happening so he asked, “What happened?”

Nobody answered him when between the group, there was only deathly silence and silver butterflies flying around them.

_____

End of Chapter 21 : Silver butterflies

Coming Chapter 22 : Yellow and Amber diamonds.

_____

Fact : Maia's brother was the president in Russia's classroom.

Fact 2 : Japan dismembered Semenov.

Fact 3 : Pangaea was once Pecleos' country.

Fact 4 : Perla's supposedly spirit animal is the Philippine trogon.

Fact 5 : Hanan's (Philipia's grandma) spirit animal is an albino Burmese python.

Fact 6 : Pecleos spirit animal is Megalodon.

Fact 7 : Gondwanda's spirit animal is a Hyena.

Fact 8 : Laurasia's spirit animal is a Aardwolf.

Fact 9 : South Korea got injured protecting North Korea.

Fact 10 : My spirit animal is a turtle~ tell me yours?

Author has something to say...

The mask was lost. Poor mask-san. You will be remembered QwQ.

VGhpcmQgUmVpY2ggYW5kIElzcmFlbCA=

Chapter 22 : Yellow And Amber Diamonds

Chapter 22 : Yellow And Amber Diamonds

———————

“Okay, what is going on?” Malaysia asked looking perplexed.

Earlier they discovered a scene by the lake after seeing the bright light coming from it. Out of curiosity and because Indonesia somehow felt adventurous all of a sudden, they saw Philippa just after her baptism!

On. The. Land. Of. Pangaea!

If Poland didn't insist on buying ice cream at the school shop in the middle of autumn, they would've been oblivious to what had happened.

They all went back to philipia's old dorm and placed her down on her former bed in her former bedroom.

Jack explained to them what had happened and Greg's and philipia's lineage as though he was reciting a report to his superior. None of those dramatic hand gestures and tones, Egypt was a little disappointed.

Jack thought that it wouldn't be a problem if these love-stricken fools would know since they all have some sort of feelings for his niece. (Damn it)

Malaysia is the one that gets easily guilty.

Indonesia is playful but mature.

Germany is the... Nevermind.

Israel is loyal and passionate.

Brunei is husband material.

Poland is innocent but secretive.

Egypt is the same as Germany but a little lessen and added interest of gold maniac.

Nepal is silent but committed.

Cosmos is the... Also nevermind.

Jack scrutinized every one of them like a computer trying to scan a virus. But he finished his explanation with a, “Anyways, they are both special and yeah... Something unexpected happened today that was within my scope of expectation.”

At the end of the explanation. Israel's expression altered between shock, surprise, and worry.

Brunei sighs and sat on the armrest of the couch. “Why am I not surprised?”

Estonia comments, “Is it because of the term, ‘Every person with yellow eyes are descendant of armageddon?’...”

Poland turned to him, “It was later proven to be wrong because Armageddon's eyes are more vivid and bright whilst the people with similar color have a rather dull tone to it.”

“what about mine?” Malaysia spoke and widen his eyes, specifically his right eye.

Everyone leaned close and examined it. Egypt was the first to comment, “It is dull, unlike Anuket's. Yours is somewhere around the darker color of yellow, not like the bright one.”

Germany also added, “Also, unlike the goddess' eyes as if it was hiding riches of gold and crystal, yours is boring.”

Jack raised a brow at the term ‘goddess’. He had long known for Germany's eccentric change so he wasn't surprised, just weirded-out.

Malaysia gave a hurtful look, “Woowwwww boring? Really? Can't it be more like average? Why did you have to say it's boring?”

Egypt tsked— and said, “Don't be so disappointed with yourself, cheer up average eyes.”

Malaysia, “…”

Indonesia let out a —pffed! but immediately shifted to serious when Malaysia glared at him, acting as if nothing happened.

Jack sighed and gave a bad review for them for his niece. “Nevertheless. Don't tell anyone, got it? If I knew someone else knows about other than you bastards, I'll personally cut your dicks off.” he threatened.

Everyone in the room somehow felt a slight pain in their region and couldn't help but close off their legs, except Israel, Germany, Nepal, and Brunei who remained unfazed by his threat.

Brunei then stood up and went to the kitchen, “We promise, but you can't keep this a secret forever, you must prepare what will happen once her brother knows.”

He is aware of martial's opposition to philipia's baptism for whatever reason, but he wouldn't be able to imagine what his reaction would be once he found out. Brunei shuddered at the thought.

Jack knew that Brunei has a close relationship with their country and with philipia so he wasn't surprised he's mindful of their decision. “Got it, I'll make sure he won't find ou--”

“AHHH!” All of a sudden, there was a scream from philipia's room, followed by a crash and a door slamming.

Everyone didn't even waste another second and barged into the room. Jack was at the front and first saw Philipia sitting up on the bed, wearing a different dress. But then he froze and felt something penetrating his inside and squeezing his heart and mind.

He screamed in pain and hurriedly ran to the kitchen and threw up.

“How... How pretty....” Malaysia muttered, but his eyes were in a trance like he was under control. He took a step forward and grab philipia's throat, the trance-like expression turned maniac and crazy, “Mine! Mine! Mine! Mine!!!!!!”

“what the fuck!” Indonesia quickly pulled him and hold him back as he drags him outside, avoiding eye contact with philipia. “Close the door! Don't look at her! Don't!”

He then saw Poland standing by the door, also in a trance-like state. He stepped inside the door and said while crying, “Can't you be mine? Can't you be mine? Mine? Mine? Mine???!!!”

Indonesia clicked his tongue and yelled, “Poland! Snap out of it! Snap out of it!”

Cosmos then came and pulled Poland back and immediately closed the door behind them, leaning on it.

Malaysia was still struggling, like a madman who finally saw his desire. “Release me! Let me go! Must give! Her... Must give her!”

Indonesia then hit the back of his neck and put Malaysia unconscious. He hurriedly caught him and breath in relief. Poland had also woken up but in a more calm manner.

“What was that...?” Germany asked.

When they had heard the scream, jack was at the front, next was Malaysia, then Poland, then Indonesia, and cosmos. Amidst the sudden problem, Germany peered in and saw his goddess.

Once he made eye contact, it felt like an arrow shot him and started to circulate in his body, squeezing his heart, making his soul tremble in pleasure and devotion. It was like a spell that almost made him kneel and obey.

Indonesia had also seen it and was almost in a trance-like state but quickly snapped back when Malaysia suddenly grabs her throat. His concern overpowered him and instantly hold Malaysia back, almost avoiding a disaster.

Jack came back with Egypt, Nepal, Estonia, Israel, and Brunei following after him. “All of you, get back here...” he said.

They all obeyed and none of them said anything, only after processing what had happened did Jack asked, “What did you see?”

Germany answered, “Crystal”

Poland also added, “It was... Like a diamond, shining and glowing.”

They were describing something beautiful but their expression were miserable and nervous.

Indonesia placed Malaysia on his bed and tuck him in, leaving the door open in case he woke up and do something stupid.

Suddenly, Greg came out of the room, walking down the hall while supporting himself by the wall. Israel was about to help him but Greg gave a stop sign, “It's fine... I'm fine.”

Greg sat down and pointed at Estonia, “You, blind dude.”

Estonia had been clueless since earlier but he can tell the situation was wrong. He flinched when his name was called and pointed himself, “M-me?”

Greg nods, “Yeah, you. Go inside.”

Indonesia immediately understood so he stood up and held Estonia's hand. “Come on, let's go.”

“Huh? But why? Why??????”

They stop by the door and Indonesia advised, “I'll open the door, and when you feel like you're being attacked, tell me immediately, if not, keep walking inside and to her.”

Estonia was confused but he obeyed and nodded. Indonesia glance back at the end of the hall where everyone was watching before he twisted the doorknob and opened the door with his eyes closed and face looking the other way.

Estonia blinked a few times and tried to feel something but didn't, so he hesitated but stepped inside and walked in. He wasn't scared since he knew this is supposedly his sweetheart's room, he can smell the strong scent of jasmine in the air, the smell he is most familiar with.

“E-Estonia...?” Philipia called, massaging her neck where Malaysia almost choked her.

When Philipia woke up, she felt like a new person who was born once again and felt enlightened, motivated, inspired, stimulated, and energized. So when she sat up and saw her brother in her bathroom washing his hands and fixing his hair, she called out to him.

Greg brightened up and was about to walk back to her. But he suddenly stops and paused and gazed at her with a frightened look, afterward he yelled in pain and slammed the bathroom door.

She was about to leave the bed and ask what was wrong but her uncle and the others barged in. Jack had the same reaction but Malaysia didn't. She was confused and scared but before she could say anything, Malaysia mumbled something under his breath and grab her throat.

After that, Indonesia stopped him and they all left the room, leaving her confused.

Estonia felt his way towards her but unexpectedly received a hug instead. “Woah! S-sweetheart?”

Philippa sniffled and asked, “What happened?! What is happening?!”

Estonia was in a good mood so he hugged back and placated her, rubbing circles on her back and brushing her hair. “I'm not sure but, they were talking about your eyes just now. And I think they made me come instead because I couldn't see.” it was the first time Estonia felt happy to be chosen to do something, usually he hates being given a responsibility like being chosen as a leader in a group project and so on.

Philipia wipes her tears, “My eyes?” she asked.

Estonia nodded and said, “do you have a mirror here? You know I can't see.”

Philipia nodded and took his hand and went to the mirror together.

She stood there, dumbfounded as she stares at her eyes.

The normal-looking yellow and Amber eyes suddenly crystallize. For a second, a short memory flashed by, and saw her grandmother in her place, looking at her with a sweet smile that is as bright as the sun.

Philipia steps back and was caught by Estonia, “What's wrong? Were you hurt? Eh? Sweetheart, why are you trembling?”

“What is this? What is this supposed to mean? What is this supposed to convey?...”

Estonia had no clue yet he can feel her sudden unsettling mood. “Sweetheart, calm down. Tell me what's wrong first...”

Philip's grab his collar and exclaimed, “These eyes! When will they give me a break!? When will it stop?! What's so special about it?! Tell me! Tell me!”

Estonia closed his eyes and held her hand that's holding him, it was cold and shaking. “I don't know, but I wish I had the answer...”

Philipia slumps down and cried, her bead size tears pitter-patter on the floor. “When will this stop...?”

...

After calming down, Philipia took a cloth and wrapped it around her eyes. “You may... Call them in.”

Estonia stayed with her till she stopped but he couldn't do anything or say anything because there's nothing much to say when he can't even see the problem.

“Alright,” he said and feel his way to the door. Once he came out, he felt like everyone was standing and eavesdropping. “You guys are there, right?”

They all glance at each other with a look of guilt. Estonia scoffed and gesture them to come in, “She said it's okay now.”

Jack came in first, “Niece” he called and noticed the cloth covering her eyes. For some reason, he felt guilty.

“I'm not sure why your reactions were like that but, if it was too terrifying, I apologize.”

Germany quickly said, “No it's not! Goddess, it wasn't terrifying, it was just...” he paused before continuing, “It was just too beautiful we've lost control.”

Philipia didn't understand but she didn't say anything.

Israel then walks in and sat down, “Your neck” earlier, he immediately felt that pain on his neck when Malaysia grabbed her.

Philipia avoided his touch and said, “I'm okay. I just need a rest.”

“Okay...”

...

Greg remained in the living room with Indonesia while the rest went to Philipia's room. He leans back on the couch while massaging his temple.

Indonesia spoke, “We need someone who knows more about Armageddon, it could be the answer why she had those.”

Greg responds dispiritedly, “Yeah? Then who do you think we should ask? Tethys?”

He wasn't serious when he said it but Indonesia nodded, “Right, it's Tethys we need.”

This opinion surprised Greg that he shot up from his seat, “What are

you nuts? Like hell we can trust that guy! What do you think he'll do once he learned that we're related? Congratulate us and give us a warm party and sing welcome home? Fuck no!”

Indonesia sighs, “I was just suggesting, but tell me, what did you feel when you saw her eyes? Your reaction seemed more severe.”

Greg answers, slumping back in his seat. “It felt like I was being choked to death, the veins in my head were twisting and throbbing as if the person looking at me had some sort of a vendetta, or like the same feeling as a sumpa!”

Indonesian raised a brow, “Sumpa?”

“a curse! You know, voodoo.”

“Uh... Huh” and then he realized something and asked, “You've been cursed before?”

Greg casually replied, “Yeah, I didn't know the girl I dumped was into witchcraft.”

Indonesia was one of the people who believed in superstition and dark magic and couldn't help but shudder. “I'm surprised you're still alive.”

“Eh, I gave her one more fucking so she let me go, that one last fucking lasted till morning and we did a lot of positions till she couldn't walk the next day. I thought for sure she'll suck me dry, that was the most intense and fierce hate-fuck of my life.”

Indonesia looked speechless at his casual attitude.

Suddenly, Philipia walks out of the hall with a blindfold and the two of them stood up. “Brother, I'm sorry if I frightened you.”

“what frightened?! I wasn't frightened at all, it was just a sudden attack and I wasn't prepared. Don't be so down okay, pearl?”

Philipia nodded, expressing she understands. Although she was blindfolded, she could still walk normally as if she could see.

“Are we going now?” Greg turned to jack.

Jack replied, “Yeah. Anyways, thanks for letting us stay in her room again.”

Brunei shakes his head, “It's hers to begin with. She can always come back whenever she wants, nobody comes in or out of it or occupied it after that incident.”

Greg probes, “Or is it that nobody wants to occupy that room at all? I know how these pangaeans— I mean Tethyrians— think.”

Brunei didn't say anything and simply shrugged.

While they were still talking, Philipia was already standing by the elevator. Once the door opened, America and china walks out, bumping into philipia.

“My bad— oh. Philipia, what are you doing here?” America asked, expressing his delight to see her but soon noticed the cloth wrapped around her eyes.

China was the first to ask, “What happened?”

First, it was the mask, now it's a blindfold? China thought as he stared at the female in front of him.

Philipia replied calmly, “Some accident.”

But China wasn't convinced, he crossed his arms on his chest, showing that domineering look of a student council, “If it's some accident, please do tell. I'm curious.”

America watched the exchange between China and Philipia and felt like something is wrong.

“Hey! Ching-- I mean, China!” Greg yelled and stepped in front of Philipia, “What do you want? Why do you look like that as if you're interrogating my sister?”

China rebuked, “Greg, visitation hours are over, if I ever see you again walking on campus I'll have to throw you out.”

“I was once a student here!”

China puffed his chest out, “*Was*” he corrected and took a step closer even if he's half a head shorter, Greg felt the pressure. “*Was* a student. But you're no longer a student, you stopped attending about two decades ago. ”

America whistled and muttered, “Sexual tension. I'm getting gay vibes in here guys.”

Greg disdainfully said, “Even if I do fuck men, I have standards, I don't go for average-looking motherfuckers.”

China wasn't even apprehensive and retort, “Who told you to insult your dad? Pssh”

America exclaimed while laughing, “OHHHHHH!!!!!!! Burrrnnnnnnn”

At this moment, Jack had just finished talking with Brunei and Israel and arrives at the scene where Greg was taunted. Though he didn't defend the man and disappointingly said, “Disgraceful, you can't even win this argument?”

Amidst the conversation, Philipia already slipped past them and entered the elevator. When she walked out, she stops by the entrance of the building and exhaled. Her breath releasing a thin fog from the cold.

She recalled her discussion with them back in her previous room.

After she apologized to everyone, they all explained what they felt upon seeing her eyes. She wondered if it was an unconscious command like how she used her aura to intimidate and oppress her enemies back when they were abducted. Unknowingly, she used ‘*alpha's command*’ that only continent leaders can use.

After that realization, it was enough proof that she's a legit descendant of Armageddon. But the first female leader had long been dead and there had been no one else like her through the years, so no one can tell her what to do or what not to do.

Egypt first suggested asking Tethys but it was quickly omitted by Israel, Brunei, Jack, and Estonia. Simply because they don't trust him and dislike him. Although the rest, including Philipia, didn't mind and thought that it was a good idea.

Nepal also suggested asking China. China had long been known to be knowledgeable and capable of obtaining any information. Most of them obtain information from him when they were trying to find exiles and fugitives. And he's proven enough to be competent and reliable.

The results were, 5 of them agreed and 4 disagreed. The four that disagreed were Cosmos, Estonia, Israel, and Brunei. Simply because they also don't like him.

5 out of 4, the former won.

The next thing they discussed was how to hide philipia's eyes. If she showed them, there would be another chaos in school so they suggested making her a new mask which Egypt and Poland enthusiastically requested to make, along with Nepal and Estonia.

Afterward, Philipia proposed to leave and opposed to sleep there before she could cause anymore trouble. She then went to Malaysia's room where he still lay unconscious, bowed and apologized then left.

Philipia takes off the cloth and saw a silver transparent butterfly, flapping its transparent wings towards her and land on her nose. “Oh, brother did tell me that a butterfly was my spirit animal...”

The silver butterfly gently flaps its wings and conveyed a message. Philipia was first taken aback at first but adapted quickly.

“You are... Loved.... We... Love.... You”

Philipia felt her eyes swell up and her nose burning. She sniffled and wipe away the tears that were about to fall, “This won't do. Crying over little things, I'm turning into a kid, so childish...”

The butterfly flew and rested itself on the side of her forehead like an accessory that compliments her pretty face. Unknowingly, the

transparent wings of the butterfly reflected her crystal eyes, giving it a bewitching look that could captivate the hearts of men and women.

Not far from her. Tethys stood dumbstruck, holding a box that contains her new mask. He gazed at Philipia and her eyes, feeling as though something was squeezing his heart (in a good way) and scratching it, like a kitten begging for attention.

Although he very much wants to run to her and hug her and kiss her and declare her as his, he immediately felt like there is something he is missing, something he's oblivious about.

When Philipia covered her eyes again with a white cloth, Tethys walks out of the corner and acted surprised. “Oh! Philia, there you are— hmm? What's wrong? What's with this mask?”

Philipia was genuinely surprised when Tethys suddenly appeared. “O-oh... I didn't know you came, h-how did you know I was here?”

Tethys smiled, “To go to the teacher's dorm, I first have to walk past the student's dorm.”

Philipia finally realizes her stupid question, “I see... I didn't realize, uhm. Were you perhaps looking for me?”

Tethys was about to reply when the elevator gives a —ding! Sound and Jack and Greg comes out. They first saw Philipia but their expression turned grim when they saw Tethys.

Tethys narrowed his eyes and glanced at the blindfolded Philipia. He greeted with a cold smile, obviously he showed his suspicion towards the two. “What. A. Coincidence, I was about to look for you.”

Greg shuddered from his smile that doesn't look like a smile whilst Jack remained indifferent.

“Is there something you need?” Jack inquired. Showing no expression on his face.

Although Philipia was blindfolded, by the tone of their voice, it

didn't sound adequate.

She wanted to see their faces and know what is going on but is afraid to show her eyes when Tethys is standing there. Although it was already too late and that he had already seen it by accident.

“I just wanted to come by and give this to philia.” He showed the beautifully wrapped up box, “I asked for another mask since she lost the other one.”

Philipia perked up and said, “Another mask?”

Right after she asked she felt the other pull the ends of the cloth. “Yeah, if you don't mind. I'll personally help you wear it.”

Philipia immediately shut her eyes closed and said, “N-no it's okay! I can wear it myself!”

Tethys expressed his regret, “That's a shame, I've been wanting to try it~”

Jack hurriedly stood between them and coldly said, “If you don't mind, my niece is in a bad condition right now and hurt her eyes.”

Tethys smirked and replied, “Of course. Here,” he hands the box in one hand to Greg who takes it and nods his head.

“I'll come and visit you again soon philia,” Tethys said then added, “Farewell.”

“Ah, y-yes. Farewell, Tethys.”

When the man's figure disappeared, Jack breaths out, he didn't even noticed he's been holding it back since earlier. His tense muscle relaxing, “That fucker. See what I mean when I opposed on telling him?”

Greg sneered and added, “That idiot better not do that kind of stunt again or I will kick his ass.”

Philipia hurriedly said, “Please don't.”

“Pearl! That guy is dangerous, my balls are telling me he is.”

“I know...” she can already tell Tethys was suspicious, but the fact that he didn't even ask about it makes it ten times scarier.

But what is there to be scared of? What is there to be afraid of?

Those words naturally flowed in her head and couldn't help but think of the small butterfly behaving on her head.

Greg unwraps the box and takes out the same-looking mask, “Eugh. Creepy.”

Mask: QwQ

Philipia had her eyes closed all the time so she quickly grabs the mask from Greg and wore it. Finally she has her armor again!

The next morning Philipia came to school with her new mask and she no longer felt tense and nervous.

She scanned around the room and saw that it was still more than half empty, and even more so when Japan went back home.

Philipia sat down and takes out the book for today's first lesson.

South Korea then took a seat next to the empty desk beside her. “Yo, new mask?”

Philipia nodded her head, “Tethys gave it to me.” when she told Egypt and Poland that she had a new mask, the two were disappointed but were happy for her when she didn't have to go to school blindfolded like a fool.

South Korea comments, “Heh. Why am I not surprised?”, he steadily stared at her, and within his tired dark brown eyes was only her. He asked, “Hey, wanna visit J's sis? Tokyo was it?”

Philipia tilted her head to the side, “Why are you suddenly suggesting visiting her?”

South Korea shrugs, “Dunno. Just felt like it, or perhaps I wanted a

change of scenery and visiting his sister is just an excuse...”

Philipia looks down at his casted right arm, “I can ask Tethys...?”

“Don't force yourself.” He grins.

Philipia shakes her head, “No no. I also wanted a change of scenery and... I owe her an apology too. And I also promised Kyoto...”

South gave a sincere smile and patted her head as encouragement, “Don't be so down.”

“You were the one who started this conversation” Philipia replied.

South Korea chuckled and raised his uninjured hand, “Guilty as charged. I just don't have anyone else to talk to, now that boring guy and annoying dude are gone.”

Philipia unconsciously soften her eyes and thought of healing his right arm but she didn't want to gain any attention. Even if they are only a few students and none of the leaders she knows have arrived yet, she didn't want to take that risk.

After a while, Spain, America, and china arrived. China gave a look at Philipia for a second, his expression unreadable but Philipia can tell what he's thinking.

His tito or perhaps one of them had already told him about her case.

Spain sat down on his seat and was about to take out his notebook and book but paused for a second and slowly turn his head towards Philipia.

‘*baptism...?*’ He thought when he felt a new atmosphere from her that wasn't there before.

Spain always had a strong sense of feeling, he can perceive someone looking at him with hidden motives or killing intent from a few feet away.

Sitting so close to Philipia gave him a strong change of it, and the

first thing he thought of was baptism. He glanced at the female whose face was obscured by the mask.

Philipia felt a gaze and only turn her eye to where it is and saw Spain staring at her with a probing look as if he's trying to uncover a conjecture.

She remained indifferent and oblivious and simply started writing in her notebook.

[I am pretending to write something in my notebook because Spain is looking at me]

Maharlika watching everything, “…”

Once class started, Philipia kept feeling multiple eyes staring at her the whole time

China, “…”

Spain, “…”

South Korea, “…”

When it was finally lunchtime, she hurriedly takes out her lunch box and left the room. South Korea quickly followed after, “What's the hurry?”

Philipia honestly replied, “I didn't feel comfortable, want to join me?”

South was more than happy to agree, “Why not?”

They searched for a place to eat and arrived at the back of the school near the lake where she was baptized and an old abandoned equipment room.

South Korea saw a comfortable place to seat and patted the place next to him for Philipia. It was only then did she remove her line of sight away and assisted south Korea in opening his store-bought lunch box.

South Korea then looked at Philipia's own lunch box and gawks at the colorful food, neatly arranged like it was some sort of artwork. “That looks good,” then he shamelessly said, “I want one.”

Philipia didn't mind and let him take any food he liked and ate it with relish. Although South Korea is right-handed, he can still use his left for the same thing as writing and eating.

When Philipia takes out her spoon and fork, she stabbed the croquet and lifted her mask, inserted it inside, and ate it.

South curiously asked, “I've been dying to ask this, why the mask?”

Philipia replied, “Because of reason”

“Aisshh. I've heard that answer many times already, tell me, what is the real reason?” South Korea's speaking habit unconsciously came out without him noticing.

Philipia faced the other with her blank, two-holed mask and repeated. “Because of reason.”

South Korea eventually gave up and was about to change the topic when they heard a loud nasal-like moan.

Both Philipia and south Korea froze on the spot.

The eggroll fell from South's chopstick and whispered, “Omo... Is it from the equipment room behind us...?”

Philipia nodded.

“Holy shitttttt, someone is having se--”

“Ahhh~~! Ahhh~ no more, Ahhnn~~”

Philipia, “…”

South Korea cleared his throat and fan himself, “some student must be pent up already.” he said and looked at the female who is remaining unfazed and resumed eating, ignoring the ambiguous skin-to-skin smacking sound and high-pitched moaning from the

inside of the equipment room.

Although outside she remained calm and composed, internally, she's screaming and is embarrassed to death.

'*Oh my gosh, this is so awkward! Oh my goodness! It's broad daylight! The sun is still up! People are eating lunch but they are eating each other! Goodness me!*'

Maharlika who can hear everything, "…"

It's a good thing the others is in deep slumber, especially mauve. Otherwise, it would be enough trigger to put her up front and take control. Who knows what she will do to South, poor man will be eaten alive.

After a moment, the smacking sound turned consistent to faster that a few pieces of equipment fell.

Even the woman's moaning turned louder and hasty as though she was running out of breath, then it turned muffled then came the sound of lips smacking and tongue rolling, the slurping sound was so loud that Philipia didn't touch the juicy Pancit her tito made.

South Korea coughed, also feeling hot and awkward. After all, he is a man and a healthy one at that. He can't even remember the last time he had sex, whenever he tries to recall it felt as though it was like a thousand years ago.

South Korea awkwardly comments, "W-wow. They're getting fired up."

The smacking sound finally stopped and slowed down, the woman whimpered and moaned while being kissed.

Philipia looks down at her food and saw it was half touched but she already felt full.

The people inside the equipment room seemed to have put their clothes back on. The door then opened and a guy and female student from the other academy came out.

The woman hugged the guy's neck and coquettishly said, “Call me again~” before she left.

The guy stood in place for a moment and watched the woman walk towards the forest and disappear.

South admired, “That woman was from the female academy. Dang, I guess Tethys still have a lot of work to deal with. I guess that wall isn't enough to hold them back anymore”

Just then, a shadow loomed over the two and they both looked up at the same time.

Hue blue hair, a single golden dangling earring on the left ear. The man smirked and said, “Did you enjoyed the rated 18 ASMR?”

South Korea joined in his banter, “No, the girls moaning sounded a bit fake and high-pitched, our ears were hurting ya know.”

The man raised one brow and shifted his gaze to the female who wore a mask and remained indifferent and kept eating as if the two didn't exist.

The man chuckled and kneeled to her eye level, “Too wet to stand?”

Philipia replied, “Too disgusted to eat.”

South Korea let out a —Pffed! And coughed when food got stuck in his chest. He pounded on it and hurriedly gulps down his water.

The man smiled, he felt amused and introduced himself. “This one's name is Atlantis. Nice to meet ya.”

Philipia stared at his hand waiting for a handshake, “My name is Philipia, how do you do.”

His handshake was ignored but he didn't get angry. “Philipia from the philippines? I had heard about you when I arrived here.”

South Korea breaths out and turn to Atlantis with a look of astonishment, “Atlantis? Tethys' cousin?”

Philipia paused for a second but resumed eating, keeping up the indifferent attitude. Luckily the mask hides her beet-red face.

Atlantis scoffed, expressing his dislike when Tethys' name was mentioned. “Hey, no need to mention that guys name?”

South Korea smirked, “Oh? Hurt your feelings?” and laughed.

Atlantis smiled condescendingly before he stood up and dusted his hand on top of their food. Both South and Philipia froze. “Whatever, you guys can be losers all you want.” and left.

South snapped the chopsticks in half and said through gritted teeth, “Did he just... Dusted his hand on our... Food?”

Philipia muttered, “Disrespectful...”

Both South Korea and Philipia had a bad impression of the new student Atlantis that day.

...

“Did you hear? A new student attended despite the news of the attack in school?” Vietnam said while eating lotus seed.

Mexico burps quietly after downing a coke, “I saw him, he looks nothing like senior Tethys.”

Philipia furrowed her eyebrows when she recalled earlier at lunch when he dusted his dirty hands on top of their food.

Italy felt her displeasure, “You met him?” he asked, leaning on the pillar at the side hall.

Philipia replied, “He dirtied our sacred food.”

Vietnam gasped, “Noo...”

Philipia stated, “Yes”

Vietnam slams his fist on his knee, “How could he!”

“Both young masters are arrogant, at least Tethys is tolerable.”

Mexico comments.

The 3 leaders nodded at the same time, agreeing on Mexico's words. Italy added, “As a matter a fact, I bumped into him this morning, he was moving his things in his dorm, and guess what he first said to me.”

The three looked ad each other and waited for his next words. Italy continued, “He said: ‘Ola Stupido’...”

Mexico exclaimed, “That man is racist!”

Vietnam sighs pitifully, “Why is that family so... Crazy?”

Italy shrugs, expressing that he didn't care, “Beats me. It didn't bother me what he said anyways.”

Philipia ate the lotus seed that Vietnam provided, “as long as we stay out of his way, we won't get in trouble.”

“won't get in trouble what?”

All of them turned their heads towards the source of the sound, Atlantis stood not far from them with his hands wrapped around the shoulders of both women.

They were students from the female academy.

Mexico spilled his drink and started coughing.

Atlantis raised a brow and said, “Why does everyone in this school dislike me? What? Is my high authority intimidating ya? Hahaha!” he laughed and his women also laughed.

Italy groaned and massage his forehead, “Not the bad boy cliché...”

Vietnam points at him and said, “You! Just because you're Tethys' cousin doesn't mean you're favored! Right lotus?”

‘*Why are you asking me...?*’ Philipia thought but continued eating the lotus seed.

Atlantis scoffed, “I have a name, you don't have to mention that bastard every single time you see me.”

Mexico finally calmed himself down and taunted, “Senior Tethys' cousin. Are you having fun in Pangaea?”

The women giggled and Atlantis clicked his tongue. “I have a name Texas 2.0”

Mexico wasn't even provoked and continued speaking with a smile, “Just so you know senior Tethys' cousin. Women aren't allowed here, except when they're a leader like amor.”

Atlantis gazed at the female leader who continued eating, the same attitude she showed the first time they met. He chuckled and roughly pushed the women from his arms away, “Just because I'm from the branch family doesn't necessarily make you country leaders have more authority than me. I can always sweep you off whenever I can.”

Italy rolled his eyes and didn't even lower his voice when he said, “The waters have been polluted lately that these blue-haired freaks smell like garbage.”

Philipia who is also a blue-haired freak, “…”

Vietnam puffs his cheeks and asked, “Lotus, how do you tend a plant? Don't you snap off its twig, cut off the excess, and even the branches because they're what? Worthless? Don't they just destroy and even get infected and wilted that it'll affect the main branch?”

Philipia added, “Sometimes it just falls on its own. Because it's too heavy for its support.”

Mexico also added in a mocking tone, “Sometimes it just falls off because its ego is too heavy, right?”

Both Vietnam and Mexico laughed out loud.

Atlantis smirked and a layer of frost coated his eyes. Silently, he draws out his aura and was about to suppress the four leaders. But unknowingly, someone's aura who is much stronger fought back

and defeated him easily.

“gnh!...”

Philipia quietly eyed the man, fighting his aura with hers. Atlantis felt it and couldn't help but vomit blood, the girls behind him shrieked which caught their attention.

“Which bastard!!” he exclaimed and kneeled one knee on the ground.

Everyone was dumbfounded as they watch Atlantis continued vomiting. Italy, secretly eyed Philipia at the corner of his eye.

“What about this bastard, Atlanta?” Tethys walks out of the shadow by the hall and smiled sweetly at his Philia.

Atlantis' eyes widen, he quickly looked down and remained still, afraid to even breathe out loud.

Mexico called, “Senior Tethys”

Tethys gave a short ‘hi’ gesture before standing in front of his philia who is still peeling lotus seed. “This mask suits you so much.”

Italy dully said, “Hey, your cousin over there is causing trouble. Almost everyone knew he fucked someone in the old equipment room.”

Tethys sighed helplessly, “I know, that is why I'm here to utilize my remaining free time to deal with it. I might have to increase the height of the wall between the two academies.”

Vietnam nodded, expressing his approval, “That's right! You don't know this but I and Iran would often encounter students from the female academy! Sometimes we'd see them behind the bushes, the trees— there was also one time we caught one girl sniffing Russia's underwear from the gym's locker room!”

Italy showed a disgusted face, “S-sniffing?”

Mexico, “As expected. Senior Russia is so popular with the ladies.”

Tethys chuckled and turn towards the girls. They both flinched and hurriedly left the place, leaving Atlantis still kneeling on the ground.

“Atlanta. I thought I told you not to cause trouble.” Tethys reminds in a soft tone but carried a frost.

Atlantis shivered, “I'm still adapting to it, why do you care...?”

Tethys responds, “I see. Well, if you can't hold on for two weeks I'll have to deport you back to your country and I will have to report back to uncle.”

Italy teased, “To where? Down in the ocean?”

Atlantis gritted his teeth, stood up, and wiped the corner of his lips.

Earlier, he certainly felt the aura coming from their direction yet Tethys came out from behind him. He scanned the group and landed his gaze on the female who nonchalantly ete the lotus seed.

A smile creeped on his lips, “Hmp. That's right, mines down in the ocean, what's yours? Burned to the ground?” after that he gave a fierce glare at Tethys who remained smiling before walking away, limping as he held his aching body from that powerful counter.

Tethys turned back to them and said, “I really should apologize, he is an unfavored child and is often compared to me.”

Italy rolled his eyes “shameless,” and added, “Mexico, come on.”

Mexico stood up and ruffled Philipia's hair, “See ya around amor, we still have a lot of things to do at our club.” after that, he chased after Italy who already started walking up the stairs.

Vietnam wondered, “What's their club?”

Tethys answered and sat on the bench where Mexico was just sitting, “Horse riding.”

Vietnam's eyes brightened, “That's so cool! Lotus! Let's try it!”

Philipia shakes her head, “I'm already in a club.”

“You can still join a different club, there's only three limits of club you can take at the same time,” Tethys said.

Vietnam nodded his head, tugging on her sleeve, “That's right! You can still join two more club!”

Philipia was adamant, “No, I'm good. One club is enough.”

Tethys heartily laughed, “My philia is too loyal. Once she's committed to one thing, you can never change her mind.”

Vietnam pouted when he heard tethys say ‘my philia’. “She's not yours Tethys!”

“She will be~”

“Will not!”

“Will be~”

“Will not! Will not! Will not!”

“Will be~ Will be~ Will be~!”

Philipia suddenly stand up, catching both leaders by surprise. Vietnam worriedly called, “L-lotus?”

Philipia replied, “Bathroom...” And left.

She quickly increased her pace and found a nearby bathroom. Even though it was for males, she still pushed the door open and close it behind her and then fell on the tiled floor while clutching on her chest.

Maharlika panicked after sensing the abnormality of her body. “W-what's happening?!”

‘*I don't know! My body is burning! It's really painful!*’

Philipia gasped as she unbuttons her shirt and remove her mask. “Mnh...”

The feeling was the same when she would detect her fated pair, but this one is more intense. She can feel her blood boiling as it circulated in her veins, her head starts to get light and dizzy as though she was weightless and the only thing in her mind was to mate.

“I knew it...”

Philipia jerked back and saw Tethys standing by the door, gazing at her with the same heterochromatic eyes.

“Te...haaa...Tethys” she called, struggling to talk, struggling to breathe.

Tethys tsked— and shakes his head then close the door behind him and locks it. “You know, you have this scent on you that is as sweet as a honey? It also acts as an aphrodisiac. My philia, you're like an animal in heat.”

Philipia hung her head when she realized she took off her mask, exposing her eyes to the man before her.

Tethys took off his suit jacket and approached the female, “I thought I was imagining things when the land suddenly felt like it was occupied by a third party that night“ he told while circling her, “I wanted to check but at the same time give you the mask I had asked to be made...”

Philipia groaned and covered her mouth from producing anymore sound, her cheeks were flushed and her legs were trembling.

Tethys continued and kneeled, “Tell me the truth... Are you also a continent leader?”

Philipia refused to look at him and remained her eyes shut close. But her mind became hazy and answered with a subtle nod.

Tethys sighed and strokes her cheek. “Then why won't you look at me? Why won't you ask for my help?”

Philipia didn't answer.

He went on to say, “If you would've told me sooner then maybe you won't be in this state. The only person who knows these things the best is me. Even if you ask for China's help, his information wouldn't be enough.”

Philipia finally couldn't hold back and cried out in pain. The tight and burning feeling down there were like engulfing her body on fire.

“Won't you ask for my help? Won't you trust me?”

Philipia's vision starts to blur and his voice softened by the second, she opened her mouth but couldn't produce any words.

Tethys sighed and pressed on to her pressure point which knocked her down. He then feel his way to find her phone and dialed Jacks's number, “Hey it's me. I'm gonna need your help here.”

He then went on to wrap her with his suit jacket and kissed her forehead, “My Philia. Why must it be you?”

Suddenly, a silver butterfly flew in and settled on his forehead. “beautiful...”

———————

End of Chapter 22 : Yellow and Amber Diamonds.

Coming Chapter 23 : The forgotten half of the sea.

———————

Fact : Tethys' Spirit animal is the killer whale.

Fact 2 : Atlantis's country truly did sink at the bottom of the sea.

Fact 3 : Egypt was the one who volunteered to hide the treasures.

Fact 4 : Kyoto was cremated.

Fact 5 : Belarus had given birth.

Fact 6 : Pangaea's uniform cost half a million.

Fact 7 : Cosmos was baptized in Neptune.

Fact 8 : There are 7 fallen leaders, including Pecleos.

Fact 9 : There are 30 students in philipia's classroom. Only 16 remained.

Fact 10 : It's even cold lately, are you keeping yourselves warm?

Author has nothing to say QwQ...

VVNTUg==

Chapter 23 : The forgotten half of the sea

It was a winter afternoon, the sunlight was bright and warm as it passed through the window rails, creating a playful shadow inside in every classroom.

Outside, a thin layer of snow had already accumulated. Snowflakes falling gently, covering the ground that had been stained with dried blood from the massacre.

Philipia sat on the stairs that face the entrance of the building. She watched as the ground slowly being covered by pure white snow.

It had been a month or two after that incident whereas she felt like burning. If not for Tethys who helped her get back to her uncle's dorm and called him, she would have fainted and continue to bare the pain alone in the restroom.

Philipia held her arm, underneath the warm and thick fabric of the academy's uniform, is the scar that contradicts her flawless skin.

It has became a habit when she feels anxious. The only imperfect part of her that she absolutely love. It makes her feel at least, a little bit normal.

Recalling that day, that burning pain, she also recalled the reason and the story behind it.

Apparently, Armageddon went through the same thing. Perhaps her mother, her grandmother and her grandma's mother, way before; all went through the same thing.

Like an animal, they go through a month of ‘heat’. Their ‘eyes’ has a strong sense of survival to keep existing, hoping to appear on the next generation and more. Their ‘eyes’ would seduce anyone who looks at it in the middle of their heat, forcing that person to

willingly or unwillingly ‘mate’ with them.

Furthermore, the reason her friends would go crazy upon looking at her is to force them to like her beyond the boundary of normal. Making sure she has enough suitors to mate with in case man #1 dies.

That was when she realized, those fated pairs she has isn't really her ‘real’ fated pairs. But pairs created by these ‘eyes’ that she started to hate.

Just what is she? What do they think is she?

An animal?

Philipia gripped her arm and curled a little as she thought about it. It's laughable that something that is supposed to be proud of— now makes her sick.

Many times, she just wanted to gauge out her right eye and be done with it. Even if she has to go about her life blind, she doesn't care.

She can fight in the dark, she can always learn how. After all, she learned how to survive even without a weapon, why can't she survive without a sight?

Even if she is tempted to do so, she can't forget that her pain isn't something she's carrying alone. There are her friends out there who placed their lives on the line for her, to feel her pain alongside with her.

She sighed and released her arm before she hurt herself and them... *Again.*

Seriously, even harming yourself can be so stressful.

At this moment, Egypt and Nepal came down and saw the female leader sitting on the second last step of the stairs, watching the accumulating snow outside.

Philipia didn't even need to look back, just judging from the footsteps she can already determine who it belongs to.

Egypt beamed, “Anuket!”

Egypt and Nepal took a sit on both of her sides, Egypt sat on her right whilst Nepal sat on her left, sandwiching her in-between.

Philipia didn't reply and remained motionless, watching the snow outside. Egypt didn't mind and leaned close to her side, “What's so fun watching the snow? In my country, watching the sand is more fun.”

Nepal said, “Snow doesn't exist in her country.”

Egypt tilted his head, visible confusion appearing in his face, “I thought snow happens everywhere?”

Nepal asked, “Does snow exist in yours?”

The Egyptian leader replied, “It does, but it's a rare occurrence.”

Nepal no longer replied and turn to look at the snow with philipia. Egypt still continued to ramble on about how snow appeared once before and how shocked he was to see a white expanse in his beautiful sand country through his window and how he didn't even wanted to take a cold shower.

Although none of the two were replying, they listened to Egypt's ramble while watching the snow.

In that small moment in that winter afternoon, the three looked harmonious.

Nepal leaned closer to her shoulder, feeling her warmth transferring to him through the fabric. Philipia hasn't said a single word the whole time, but her silence and hidden expression behind her mask was enough for Nepal to feel that she isn't feeling good.

After baptizing philipia, she had been acting weird and a lot of weird things had been happening.

Nepal isn't good at comforting nor can he find the right words to say. He can only take her hand and pat the back of it, hoping his message of silent comfort can be understood.

And Philipia did understood and she's grateful for it.

Whilst the two were silent, Egypt still continued to ramble on, “He said ‘You can't be a herbalist! You're a leader! What kind of leader does a side job like a witch?’ and I'm like ‘you ignorant old fool! There's a leader out there whose side job is a lawyer and a leader whose side job is a delivery boy!’ really, I can't understand how old people survived with their ignorant mind! Phe! Just he wait, I'll be a herbalist!—By the way, did you see the poison herb I planted at the south garden? I was even considerate to put up a sign ‘its poison! don't come, sniff, touch, or look!’ but mongrel china scolded me about it and had people remove it! So I went to the back of the school and planted another poison plant, now, it's expanding and china -that student council- has no clue! HA.HA.HA.HA!”

He slapped his thigh while rocking back and forth as he laughed, “I'm even considering to plant a poison ivy! Hey, anuket, do you think they'll allow me to start a herbalist club? I can donate for the equipments necessary—” he halted and paused for a second, thinking for a moment, “phe! I'm sure they'll allow it, I'll even allow peasants to join! Sadly that peasant student died in that massacre, I couldn't even save him, he still owe me two seeds of flytrap.”

Egypt looked at the two who were silent the whole time. He clicked his tongue and placed his arm on the two, pulling the both of them even closer. “Why are the two of you so quiet? here I am making a conversation but it feels like I'm the only one here! Mongrel Nepal! Say something!”

“yeah”

“See? It's not that hard, what about you anuket?”

Philipia pursed her lips and nodded.

“Hahahahaha! Both of you looked so solemn— though anuket is wearing a mask. Which reminds me, I also had a mask! I made it when I was a kid! But my dad accidentally threw it!”

As he was about to continue, Egypt was suddenly pushed forward and rolled on the last step of the stairs and on the ground.

Fortunately, leaders were born with innate talent of combat so he was able to balance himself and not look like a pathetic man rolling on the ground.

“Hey! What gives?! Who dares to push a pharaoh!” he exclaimed.

Nepal immediately ran to his side and takes his handkerchief, patting the dust off of the Egyptian leader.

Philipia stood up and look back only to be towered by a shadow and a man. She stood on the second last step of the stairs while the man stood on the third, making him appear taller than her.

“You're blocking the way” Atlantic complained, looking at the three annoyingly.

Egypt clicked his tongue and patted his sleeves, “You could have just walked around us! Why kick me?!”

Atlantic shrugged, “No reason, I just wanted to.” he looks at philipia that is looking at him through the two holes of her mask. He grew irritated and couldn't help but think about Tethys, that bastard also liked to wear a mask.

Egypt gnashed his teeth and wanted to pull philipia away from this man. But before he could take a step, Atlantis grab her mask that is still on her face and asked, “Why are you hiding your face?”

Philipia continued to look at him.

Seeing the female leader unresponsive, he huffed and roughly released her. Nepal and Egypt immediately went to hold philipia on her back lest she fall and hurt herself.

Atlantis sneered and rolled his eyes at the three before walking down and leaving.

Egypt clenched his fist and complained, “What's with him?! What's his problem! Seriously, I'm starting to realize how weird mongrel Tethys' family is!”

Philipia lowered her head and fixed her mask in place, “He smelled

weird”

“What kind of smell?” Egypt asked, still patting off the dust.

Philipia paused for a second and said, “Like seawater.”

Egypt scratched his head and pushed his hair back, “Seawater or seaweed, he's still annoying— don't you think so anuket?”

Philipia thought of Atlantic and his expression. On his irritated expression, she can see a bit of frustration in his eyes. She also felt the same thing when she first saw him, but at that time he just finished screwing someone and he patted his hand on their lunch so she really didn't pay attention to it.

“Anuket?” Egypt called again, seeing philipia quiet.

“I don't think he's annoying, I just think he's childish.” she said.

“Phe! Childish or not, I don't like him.”

Nepal nodded in agreement.

It was because Atlantis was the one who pulled the wolfsbane flower! Egypt went through a lot to get it. Fortunately, a leaders constitution is strong so poison plants like that had no affect on them. Let alone a relative of a continent leader. Though, there are a few that can affect them as long as the effect is stronger.

If one bullet of tranquilizer can take down an elephant, five or more bullet can take down a leader.

Philipia looked out the door where Atlantic walked out and couldn't help but think, ‘*Atlantis was like brother martial when he took over the country.*’

Eyes filled with indignant and sadness. She felt like, his mischief and rebellious attitude is a shield to protect his real feelings. She's seen things like those, they aren't really unique, but it can be troublesome.

*

Atlantis kicked the snow off the ground as he walked down the steps.

Although the school now forbids a few students from going out of the academy, the guard is still helpless if it's someone of higher position such as him.

Atlantis takes out a lollipop and threw the wrapper in the trashcan before his shoe stepped on the cold sand of the beach.

There were still police tapes blocking the entrance but who could stop him?

Thus, Atlantis ignored the warning sign and saw the empty and desolate beach.

The beach is only a walking distance from the academy so it didn't take him long from arriving at the place.

The snow and sand had mixed, giving it a beautiful scene like mixing brown and white sugar. The breeze was freezing, the water at the shore would even drag a few small ice pieces.

But for a man like Atlantis who is tolerant from the cold, it's like taking a walk during summer.

Atlantis looked at the distance before he removed his shoes, casually kicking it at the side and walked towards the shore where the water meets the sand and snow.

Although the water was freezing below normal. But for a leader who spent his life in a country where water is abundant whether cold or hot. This winter water was nothing to him.

Unfortunately that country was eaten by the sea.

He can only sigh at himself as he walked forward up until the water reach his hips.

“If you're planning to commit suicide, can you not do it at my beach?”

Atlantis didn't even turn around, he snarled, “What the fuck do you want?”

Tethys chuckled, “Well, how can I just go back when I saw my dear cousin walking to the beach that clearly has a sign of no entry?”

Atlantis sneered and gave him the middle finger, “Fuck off will you?”

Tethys remained unfazed at the vulgar greeting, “Dear cousin, uncle told me to keep an eye on you, I can't just not follow.”

Atlantis rolled his eyes and walked forward till the water reach his waist.

“Dear cousin, your country fell because of natural disaster.”

“And because you guys didn't come in time to help!” Atlantis exclaimed, a few tears escaping his crystal blue eyes, almost exactly the same replica of the ocean when the sun meets the surface.

On his forehead is a Trident symbol of his flag, it glowed a bit, according to it's owner's emotions.

Atlantis' people are unique. Each and everyone one of them has a Trident symbol on their body. But only the leaders -like him- had it on their forehead to show their position.

And if their emotions gets excited, it will glow like the morning sun.

Unfortunately, only he and his father survived that catastrophe.

“Dear cousin, even if I went there to personally aid you, what happened will still happen. It is inevitable.”

Atlantis unconsciously released his marks, a beautiful ocean symbols appeared on his sea blue skin and connected to the surface of the water reaching his waist.

But before it could expand outward, there was a spark and it immediately rejected his marks which caused Atlantis to groan in pain.

Tethys smiled, his smile not even reaching his eyes, “See?” he said, as though seeing Atlantis in pain amuses him, “The land has rejected you, they can't accept you as their leader. And you've lost that position as well. So you can't blame me, dear cousin.” because this land acknowledged someone else now.

Atlantis held his aching forehead, facing the horizon of the sea. Choosing to ignore him and face the other way instead.

No matter how much he vent, no matter how tough he acts. He can't win against someone who has something that he doesn't have.

What's the point anyways? Might as well let loose and be a douchebag like everybody says.

Tethys sighs and fixed his scarf, tightening it and covering any exposed skin, “Anyways, please make sure to have someone fish your corpse.”

Atlantis remained still, looking at the crystal clear water. A few fishes would swim between his leg and curiously touch him before swimming away. He looked down at the sand, the shells, the corals, a few sea plants.

He looked at them and felt like he was back at home once again.

While looking at the calm surface, there came a ‘plop’ of raindrop.

How weird, it's snowing and raining?

Atlantis looked up when he felt a warm trickle of water on his cheek. He touched it and looked at it, then his vision went blurry and another tear trickled down, followed by another and another...

This is the 4th time he has cried this year.

How pathetic.

I have something to say...

>I know it's short but for a faster updates, I'll be shortening a few chapters. It'll be inconsistent but it'll be easier. Also. I'll only be putting facts at every end of an arc or book. Also, also — I won't be putting the future chapter titles for better surprises. (^ ∇ ^)/ ♪ hopefully it's okay (• ▽ •;). Anyways, I hoped you enjoyed and see ya on the next one<

-... .-. .- --.. .. .-..

Chapter 24 : Tonight's reading is justice

Normally, the landing area of the academy would have been filled by the students who chose to go home to their country this winter.

But after that day -which they called the ‘Autumn Massacre’- the landing area looked deserted. 50% of the students perished making the school look lonely and empty. Almost like an abandoned school.

Philipia looked at the few boats and helicopters parked on the landing area. She recalled the times when it was filled and crowded, philipia felt melancholic.

“Well, looks like we'll be seeing each other next year,” Ireland smirked as he ruffles the female leader's hue blue hair.

Philipia looked at him through the hole of her mask, “Will you be back?”

That question caught the Irish off guard. Still, he knows her question had no motive behind it and she's simply curious. Even so, he can't help but imagine her asking him when he'll be back in a coquettish tone as though she's saddened by his departure.

A man can dream too, okay?

Nonetheless, he feigned calmness and continued to ruffle her hair that had already grown longer, “I'll be back, don't miss me too much aight?”

“Okay” Philipia nodded obediently.

At this moment, Scotland arrived and saw the harmonious atmosphere between them. He grumbled under his breath and forced himself to stand in-between.

Ireland was surprised while Philipia had long known he was here.

“I'm also going to leave too,” he said; his eyes on the female leader.

Philipia nodded, “I know, Ireland told me.”

“Okay... So, d-don't m-miss me too much... too” he mumbled the last part as his voice grew faint before he strode off with large steps towards his helicopter.

Philipia, “…”

Ireland laughed at his friend, “Still shy? Though he's so obvious.”

Last week, Philipia was stopped by Scotland by the stairs. She was waiting for what he was about to say but unexpectedly, he confessed after reciting a long love poem... in Scottish.

However, as much as she hates to do it, she had to turn him down. But the man wasn't aggrieved nor sad, he merely nodded, kneeled on one knee, kissed the back of her hand, and professed that he'll wait and won't give up till she finds someone she can love. While she's still single, he will continue to confess as many times as she wants.

Philipia wasn't surprised or flustered since she's long known about it but she didn't expect Ireland to do the same. At that time, she felt like they were competing against each other.

“I am curious; if you could choose someone to spend the rest of your life with, who would it be?” Ireland asked.

Philipia was quiet and pursed her lips behind the mask, she replied: “No one...”

“Awww, can't you quench my curiosity even just a bit? Just any of the leaders here in the academy, even Tethys or Atlantis— wait, no. Scratch Atlantis, that dude was a douche.”

“But none of them were what I imagined to be with.” Philipia simply explained.

Ireland halted, “Wait, so you have a type?! And none of us fits the bill?!”

The female leader nodded, thinking that there was nothing wrong with her reasons.

Ireland felt like a rock was thrown at him, “I can't believe it...” he mumbled and said something in Irish that Philipia was unable to understand.

Meanwhile, Maharlika was laughing in philipia's head. “Silly girl, you don't even have a type!”

Philip replied, “Yes I do.”

“Oh? As someone who lives in your head, how could I not know?”

“You live in my head, not in my heart.”

This time, Maharlika was surprised and couldn't tease his silly girl anymore. Her words were a fact, he was created from her early childhood in her head, he only existed there and only came out when needed. No matter how long he had guided her and helped her, he can never truly enter her heart to understand her.

When the bell signifies the time that the leaders can now depart, Ireland straightened his body and sighed dejectedly, “Well, I'll just do my best aye?”

Philipia didn't quite understand but seeing how he recovered from his shock, she nodded and watched them leave.

When Ireland and Scotland's helicopter were nowhere to be seen in the sky, Philipia turn to her heel and left the now empty landing area.

She walked through the snow-covered concrete ground. appreciating the beauty of the expanse of snow around the school and couldn't help but shudder and pull her winter uniform closer.

Next year, their uniforms would change once again. She would be wearing the senior uniform and it would be the graduation of the next batch of students where Kazakhstan and Russia are.

Looking at the snow-covered branches, no one would be able to tell

that most of the trees here were burnt.

Philipia resumed walking, leaving a single trail of footsteps as she walks.

“coo~ coo~”

Philipia raised her head and saw a familiar owl circling above, a smile made its way to her lips. She raised her right arm which Athena obediently landed as though it was her right and property.

“Hey there, where's your owner?” Philipia asked while rubbing her neck.

Athena cooed and shakes her head.

“Did you escape again?”

Athena cooed once more, walking upwards to her forearm and rubbing her head on her ear, acting kittenish. The bird then continued to walk and rested on her right shoulder.

Philipia chuckled and continued walking when she saw a figure from afar. He wore the male winter uniform underneath a dark dark blue coat. He crouched on the snow while making a small snowman.

“The expanse of white covers the dirt, a single snowflake can make a thousand, a small discernable thing hides a beauty. What about you? What do you think about winter?” Laos asked without looking at her, he took a small twig, snapped it in half, and place it on the small snowman to make an arm, then he took a small pebble and made it its eyes.

“I think it's not bad either,” she replied, without taking another step. She watched Laos make another small snowman besides the first.

Laos hummed, “It is not bad at all. It's just chilly and cold, but if you're brave enough to venture the cold, maybe you could find the answers you're looking for.”

This time, Philipia didn't reply. After making the second snowman, Laos stood up and glanced at the female leader.

Amidst the white snow between the dead tree cave. She stands out with her green uniform.

Laos smiled and whistled. Athena didn't even hesitate and flew towards Laos. If Greece was here he would've long scolded his unfaithful bird.

But who can blame Athena when her owner won't even give her treats! Who cares if she gets fat?! She's a bird anyways! Her wings can carry her beautiful round body, and it can even help with the cold.

“Tonight's reading is justice, upright. Soon, you will face a choice from which you cannot run. Allow justice to guide your hand to the right path.” with that, Laos nodded with a smile and walk in the opposite direction, his shoulder gently brushing against hers.

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Chapter 25 : Yellow Hair Clip

As philipia walked back, Laos' words lingered in her head.

What did he mean? Why did her reading mean justice? What kind of decision will she even make?

As she approach the dorm area. She hears distinct voices from afar, although faint, she can recognize who they belonged to.

“What?! she's giving birth?!”

Japan's voice resounded. She immediately leaned against the wall and slowly walked closer.

Tokyo's giving birth?

“Sadly yes, which means, if the baby is old enough to be separated from the mother, her punishment will be active again.” Tethys' voice sounded. It was much lower than before.

Japan gritted his teeth and sighed, “She still doesn't know Kyoto is dead.”

“Would you like me to tell her?”

“No! No... she, she can't know...”

Tethys narrowed his eyes, staring at the man who leaned against the wall, his eyes filled with worry. After Japan took care of the now-dying-racoons, he immediately went back at the academy. He couldn't bare to stay in their mansion where Kyoto's existence still lingered.

Tethys asked,“Why are you so afraid?”

Japan laughed, almost mocking either him or himself, “Unlike you, I don't torture my own siblings. Sure, Tokyo may be a bit of a handful, but I never once hurt her. I just lost a sister, and I'm losing

another one again..."

Tethys fixed his cuffs, "It is her fault. She not only killed a child of mine, but she also broke a rule of her punishment."

Japan looked at the man before him. Sorrow and anger all mixed together in his obsidian eyes, "A child of yours? It's Spain and Philipia's child."

"It was mine..." if philipia didn't get a miscarriage, he could've held that childs hand, watch it grow, nurture it, spoil it. He could've had his philia too, and everything would've been perfect.

Japan scrutinized the man. Even for him, he can see a sad look in his eyes.

He can't understand it... This man was ruthless enough to torture his own blood related siblings, ruthless enough to have all those who sinned be killed in public.

But he is also soft enough to accept a child from his beloved that clearly has no relation to him.

Japan pursed his lips. Like him, he's a slave to love.

Philipia, hiding behind the wall, held her flat and empty abdomen.

She still hasn't thanked Tethys for helping her at that time in the restroom. Even in that situation, he controlled himself and sent her back safely.

"Nevertheless, Tokyo will know sooner or later. And once the baby is old enough..."

Japan leaned back on the wall, he said wearily, "Go ahead... what can I do anyways?"

Tethys didn't say anymore and turn to his heel. Japan watched his departing figure before he slides down against the wall. He sat on the cold snow and hugged his knee.

Even if he cried right now, no one will see. There's barely any

students in school anyways, most of them went home, some even quit, some were just dead...

It was then a shadow covered him and Japan raised his head. The sun was behind the person, as if a golden halo was formed around them. Squinting his eyes a little, he could make out a petite girl with hair as blue as the sky.

“Did you overheard our conversation just now?” Japan asked, giving that person a sad smile.

Philipia nodded, crouched down to his height and gave him an awkward pat on the head. Japan couldn't help but laugh and held her thin wrist that can be encircled by his hand. He pulls it down and held it on his cheek, greedily taking the warmth it emit, then proceed to give her palm a soft kiss.

Philipia was taken aback and was about to pull it off, but Japan put his strength on his hold and gave it another kiss, then a third, and a fourth before it turned into a rain of pepper kisses.

“Just let me be like this right now... please” his voice was small, but philipia can discern the weakness in it. Her concern overcame her shyness to pull her hand from the rain of kisses and simply behaved, letting the tired leader do whatever he wants.

“Philipia...”

“Hmm?”

“Kyoto is gone, and so will tokyo...”

“Hmm”

“I'll be all that's left now. I have no one who I can call little sis, and no one to call me big brother. Although Tokyo is giving birth, and a little one will call me uncle, it's still different if it's someone you grew up with.”

“Hmm...”

“Did you know, Kyoto thought her spirit animal would be a Rabbit?

She always loved those fluffy white things, she used to have plenty of it. Now, there's only one left, and it has no owner... but when I came back, it died, the same day Kyoto died. Leaving a premature baby rabbit while the rest of it's sibling died in it's mother's stomach... luckily I was able to save it before it took it's last breath."

"Hmm..."

"But I don't have time to raise rabbits... and Tokyo hated rabbits because she hated their red eyes. But I don't want to give the rabbit to just anyone, it's the only thing I have of Kyoto left. But I also don't want to see it nor be close to it, because it'll remind me of my little sis..."

"Hmm..."

While Japan had been talking, he took the warm hand of philipia and bury his face on his knees, curling up like a shivering child who was abandoned in the snow. Philipia can feel his moving lips, he press her hand on his cheek. The soft palm was so addicting that Japan was reluctant to part.

But philipia felt something wet. Her eyes soften and leaned a bit closer to Japan.

"Could this be my karma? Could this be heavens retribution from all the sins I have committed? If so, why take them from me? Why not take me? Why not take me...?"

"I don't know."

The man who was once viewed as the rising sun is now curled up as though he wanted to bury himself away from the light. Suddenly, his marks starts to appear, and Philipia's marks also appeared.

On the back of Japan's right shoulder, a beautiful red flower with a person's name on it slowly disappeared. Japan felt a painful ache on his chest as though he was being stabbed repeatedly in the same place.

Philipia was surprised at first, then she waited. She felt like

something holding inside her decided to let go and release it's grip, setting her free.

“J...?” she called.

At the corner of the school, amidst the falling snow. Two leaders were in the same position; their bright colors were in contrast to the white snow.

Japan released his hold on her, looked at her straight in the eyes and smiled. Philipia was still in a trance, confused and shocked.

Though he can't see her face, he can tell judging from her stiffness. Japan wanted to laugh, and so he did. His laughter was so heartbreaking that philipia felt like crying.

“I'm letting you go...” he said, “I don't deserve you, nor do I deserve to be in line. I gave you so much pain philipia. I can't bare to give you more. This is my own punishment, my own choice...”

Japan leaned close, placed his hands on the mask and gently removed it. Her bangs swayed from the motion and covered half of her face.

Japan then takes a yellow hair clip that looked like something you'd buy at a public market for cheap. Even so, he pushed the right side of her bangs that showed her bright yellow, jewel like eyes.

Japan was momentarily in a daze and felt like his inside were being squeezed. He was even regretting his action just now but, what happened has already happened. He can't just retrieve his decision. He already left the line, there's no turning back now.

A true leader keeps his word.

“You're so beautiful” he whispered like that of a lover, he placed his hand on her cheek and wiped the tear that is trapped on her long eyelashes, “You were as beautiful as the first time I saw you. As much as it hurts me to let you go, but because I love you so much I have to do it... as much as it pains me to death, this is the only thing that can punish me from all that I've done.”

Philipia suddenly held his sleeve, even forgetting the fact that her mask was removed and a hair clip was put on her. Revealing her yellow eye.

“J, you don't have to do this...”

Japan leaned his lips and kissed her forehead, “My last kiss for you. Thank you, I'm sorry and goodbye, my first love.”

Japan helped philipia stand up, she doesn't know what else to say, unknown what to do. She can only look at him with sorrow in her eyes.

There was a rare dazed look in her warm and clear eyes, reminding him of that time he saw her, looking at him like a lost and confuse little lamb. Japan hesitantly paused on her face, incredulous surprise was clear in her eyes.

Damn it. If he looked at her any longer, all of his willpower will go crumbling on the ground.

He then dropped another kiss, this time, on her cheek. Took a strand of her hue blue hair and kissed it as well, “May your reign. Continue for a thousand, eight thousand generations, Until the tiny pebbles. Grow into massive boulders. Lush with moss”

Japan sang his national anthem while his lips returned to her forehead, singing it with a low voice.

It's like he's not singing his nations song, it's like he's singing it as a farewell. Although the female leader might've forgotten it, but for Japan, it was still clear as a day.

For once, he's thankful his memories returned.

That time, the young philipia sat on the bed, looking tired and confused. She looked at him and smiled, with a greeting she said. “*May your reign. Continue for a thousand, eight thousand generations...*”

It was with those words that he undoubtedly fell. And undoubtedly walked towards a road where he had forgotten that little girl.

He took a step back and placed the mask back on. It was only when philipia realize that Japan was unaffected.

But it was only because his love was already so strong that her ‘eye’ didn't have to do anything. It was already above the boundary of normal.

Japan smiled and turn to his heel, leaving only a single trail of footsteps as he walked towards the gate.

Philipia's lips trembled and whispered, “May you reign... a thousand more Japan...”

*

Philipia stood In front of the mirror, looking at herself and the yellow hair clip that compliments her yellow eye. Though her hair had grown and her bangs covering half of her face, with the hair clip, it gave her a unique and clumsy style.

She looked at the scissor on the sink and looked at her reflection once more.

Maharlika already knew what she was about to do but he remained silent.

She took the scissor, spread it open, grab a handful of her hair and held it between the sharp blade.

As she was about to cut it, her hand shook and trembled.

It's just a hair, it'll grow, what does it matter if she wanted it short?

Philipia shut her eyes, maybe if she closed her eyes she won't have to feel guilty about it.

But the moment she closed her eyes, she saw her mother smiling at her, brushing her hair, whispering to her; saying “My little Perla is the prettiest, your hair will definitely grow long in the future, and mama can style it all she wants!”

Then she saw Japan taking a strand and kissing it.

She saw Ireland ruffling it into a mess before fixing it again and ruffling it once more.

‘Clank!’

The scissor fell in the sink.

Philipia held her hair and gripped it tight. The rims of her eyes were red, tears threatening to spill. She once again recalled her nature.

Every month, she will go into heat, her eyes can force anyone to like her, her eyes can force anyone to bind them to her.

If she wanted to cut something it should be this.

But she can't get hurt.

“Silly girl... Would you like me to cut your bangs for you? It can help you see better.” maharlika, who was quiet the whole time could no longer bare to just watch.

Philipia shakes her head and wipes her eyes with her palm. She blinks a few times and takes a hair comb and began combing her hair.

She took the hair clip off, styles her bangs, pushed one part of it to the side and clipped it again.

“The person fated just for me still has yet to fix my hair. For now, I'll wait.” she said, either to maharlika or to herself.

Philipia then takes the mask at the side and wore it on her face. The empty mask with two holes stared back at her. She turn to her heel and left her uncle's dorm.

*

Tethys stood before his floor to ceiling window, watching the falling snow and blue-less sky.

“Sir” his secretary came in and bowed, “Miss Tokyo successfully

gave birth to a healthy girl. What would you like to do next?”

Tethys didn't reply. He continued to admired the people below, living their own lives as though the autumn massacre didn't happen.

“Put the baby and her in the same room for now. Even if she wants to kill her offspring, don't stop her.”

The secretary was surprised but he didn't dare question the leader's decision. He can only bow and acquest.

Tethys remained still, fiddling with a broken and worn off compass in his pocket.

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I have something to say...

>> I'm updating the chapters one by one to prevent wattpad from destroying my chapters!

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Chapter 26 : Deepest part of its history

There weren't many people who possess Armageddon's eyes. China looked at the paper on his desk and couldn't help but sigh.

After searching through the deepest part of Pangaea's— no, it should be Tethyria now. After searching for the deepest part of its history, China found a lot of things, as well as forgotten projects that were left hidden in the dark.

Apparently, Armageddon once gauged out both her eyes when she couldn't handle the pursuit of her suitors. Much like philipia, some were forced, and some were pulled into a frenzy state of obsession.

She also had multiple fated pairs, but all those ‘pairs’ weren't her real and true pair. Thus, she gauged her eyes out and walked blind for 5 years before her teacher, her mother's mysterious friend, came back and help her find her husband.

Not much was written about this mysterious teacher. But according to Armageddon's writing. She wore a veil that covers her face, she would often disappear one day and appear the next. Whenever she leaves, Armageddon tried to look for her tracks but couldn't even find a single hair on their head.

She was like a phantom that comes and go whenever she wants. But whenever she appears, Armageddon would be getting the help she needed, she would always be there by her side, she would be there to have a solution that no one else can think of. She was always right on time.

In one of Armageddon's writing, her mother once said that she appeared out of nowhere in the middle of a bloody war in their country, although that war was over and they won, the teacher was of great help. She was the one who helped her mother give birth to her when they were trapped in their house because of the enemies

blocking the path.

If it weren't for her timely help, Armageddon might've not existed.

He tried searching for more and also found multiple evidence of a woman who wore a veil. Some were written as a myth and some were just baseless rumors, although he had once heard from Brazil that a woman with a veil gave him his son, he wasn't able to find her whereabouts afterwards.

China suspected that this woman wasn't just one person but multiple people in different place. He once thought that it could be a club? But after further consideration, it was too unlikely.

If he didn't researched about Armageddon and her connection to Philipia because of her eyes, he wouldn't be able to discover it.

He also went to the museum and wanted to look for more clues, but he didn't want to appear suspicious now that Tethys is the one taking over the continents.

Damn it. Was he too late to look for more?

China glanced at North Korea working on his desk and sighed. For now, he'll just have to lay low.

China flipped through another paper and wrote something on his journal book and encircled the word “Honeycomb.”

Once again, after digging a few things, he finally found out about that forgotten project.

The honeycomb project helps people edit their genes. Because people covet Armageddon's blood, many had gone to take a test.

China was one of them. His right eye, was the evidence of that project that never succeeded. Because no matter if you have her descendants blood or not, you can never replicate it artificially.

Gondwanda and Laurasia were also a product of the honeycomb project. They were conceived through artificial insemination. By editing their genes through the start of their creation in the uterus,

pangaea successfully made the two female continent leaders with an IQ higher than normal.

But this led to another failure.

Because he was too greedy and too rushed to have an heir who is perfect, Gondwanda and Laurasia went crazy because they know too much.

It was then he made Tethys. The perfect continent leader. But as China read through his discoveries, he found something amiss, a contradiction that doesn't fit right.

Because there were no evidence Tethys was artificially conceived, but he did have someone whom he called mother. Though, surprisingly, they were never related.

Of course, China can't just publicize this. He went through a lot of trouble just to dig even a little bit of it. But this is just the tip of the iceberg, there's a lot more of it going on.

The man leaned back on his seat and looked at North Korea sitting at his own desk, busying himself by compiling the files of every students.

China then took the papers and placed them on a folder before he did his work as well.

But no matter how much he research, he can't get the doubt off of his head.

Why did pangaea chose to resort such a thing? As a powerful man, he can get whatever he wants, why is he so obsessed replicating his grandmother's blood when it's flowing in his own?

China's hand suddenly shook, his eyes widen and his pupils dilated. He halted, frozen in his seat as his head began to connect a few things.

“It couldn't be that...”

‘BAM!’

The door suddenly opened with a loud noise, South Korea walks in and slammed his hand on North's table who remained unfazed and kept compiling the files.

“Hey! I have some questions for you!” he exclaimed.

China, who felt a cold sweat run down his back, sighed in relief as he looked at the two. For a moment it felt like he stepped on a landmine that would go off any moment.

“What the hell is wrong with that Atlantis?! Why is he in our classroom?!” south yelled, his chest undulating between anger and frustration.

North, “I was not the one who placed him there.”

South, “Then move him! You owe me your life! The least you can do is move that annoying son of a bitch!”

North paused and glared at his twin, “I owe you my life? Since when did I owe you?”

South exclaimed, “When I protected you when you were about to die!”

North, “For your information, I was not about to die and I would never die, the least that could happen is that I get injured and all, but not die.”

South, “exactly my point! If I didn't save you, you would've been injured! But I protected you so I got injured!” he pointed his casted arm.

North, “Nobody asked for your help, and I could've done my job way better than you did, and if you could've minded your own business you wouldn't be injured.”

South, “I don't know! My body moved on its own before I could understand what was happening!”

North sighed, rub the side of his temple and sat straight and resumed compiling the files.

South stood there for a moment and watch his twin ignore him and do about his business. “North Korea!”

Still ignored.

South's fuse was short today, one, it was cut because of an annoying Atlantis, two, because his twin ignored him, three, because his twin wasn't even the least bit grateful for his heroic rescue.

“Fine! You sucked anyways! I regret covering your back at that day! From now on, I'll never cover your back anymore!”

North nonchalantly replied, “Close the door when you leave.”

“Fuck you dude!” he exclaimed and gave two middle fingers.

‘SLAM!’

China looked at North then at the door, but before he could relax, the door once again opened and kicked wide till it reached the wall. South stood at the door and gave a second wave of double middle finger at North, grabbed a handful of choco candy at the desk from the fishbowl and left without closing the door.

North, “…”

China, “…” sigh. Because of them, he almost forgot he discovered a huge secret just now.

North stood up, closed the door and went back to his seat, but before he could touch the chair, he paused and walked towards the window.

“Looks like this year's winter batch finally came.”

China followed his gaze and walk towards the window. Below them are a bunch of leaders running towards a man.

“So he finally came.”

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Chapter 27 : Giant Puppy

“ASEAN!!!!!!!!!” Malaysia ran as he screamed, wrapping his arms around the man's shoulder. Indonesia followed behind him and tripped, falling face first on the snow-covered ground.

ASEAN, a bright man, laughed as he patted Malaysia's head, “What a warm welcome I recieved.”

Laos, Vietnam, Singapore and Brunei Followed after. Vietnam beamed and ran excitedly at the three who caught up to ASEAN.

“Vietnam, how are you?” he asked.

Vietnam smiled and said, “Better than ever.”

Laos nodded at him, “Todays reading is very good, a very auspicious day indeed.”

Singapore pushed the bridge of his glasses, he berated, “Can you stop that? Things like that don't even happen, It's all coincidence.”

Laos simply smiled, “Your reading today is very unlucky, very unfortunate.”

“What?! Why?”

Laos shrugged, still wearing that gentle smile, “I don't know, but good thing you don't believe in those things.”

Singapore, “…”

Seeing them interact, ASEAN couldn't help but laugh. “It is very refreshing to see you all gathered, it reminded me of the old times.”

Brunei exhaled a warm breath on his freezing hands, “You make it sound like we're old grandpa's”

Indonesia introjects, “Aren't we all? We're older than a civilians

great grandpa!”

Alas, the sense of time for every leaders are too blurry that Brunei couldn't help but think twice about it.

Indonesia dusted the snow off of him and wrapped his arms on his shoulder like Malaysia. “All that's left is Cambodia, myanmar and Thailand!”

Malaysia grinned even more, “I missed Bodi! That tall ass simpleton, it'll make school life fun!”

ASEAN chuckled, “Ironic, Cambodia came with me.”

*

“E-excuse me”

Philipia turn to the voice and couldn't help but slowly lift her head from the giant Infront of her.

Large square shape glasses, curly hair, tall build. Cambodia wore a casual winter clothes with a thick scarf that was wrapped beautifully around his neck with a ribbon style on the back.

“D-do you perhaps know where the dormitory is? The academy is too large, I've been walking for a while and I couldn't ask for anyone's help.” he timidly said as he looked at the tiny female student wearing a mask.

This was philipia's first time meeting Cambodia, and her first time meeting a tall person that is taller than Russia and America.

Maharlika complained in her head, “What do leaders eat nowadays?! How come they're all tall?!”

Did you even forget, you yourself is tall?

Philipia commented internally which maharlika was able to perceive.

Feeling a bit awkward, Cambodia fiddled with his sleeves whilst his

other hand fiddled with the handle of his suitcase.

“Which dorm building number?” she asked. Her voice a bit muffled through the mask.

But to Cambodia, who not only has a gifted height, but also has a gifted hearing, was able to tell that this person must be good looking to have such a good voice.

Once he realize her question, he hurriedly takes his card. As a socially awkward person who gets nervous easily, he fumbled through his pockets, trying to find the card which was given to him.

“Uhh... I t-think I lost my c-card?”

Philipia tilted her head and watch the new leader in front of her with interest. But her neck is starting to get sore.

She then approached the leader who is still panicking where he forgot his card before he turned rigid when the female leader leaned close and pulled the tag hanging from the handle of his suitcase.

Surprisingly, he was assigned in her old dorm building and in her old room.

Philipia didn't mind since she already emptied her room with no reason to go back anymore, it's only natural someone will have to take her place.

“Come, I'll show you the way.”

Despite it being winter, Cambodia was sweating a lot. He nodded and hung his head low like a dejected puppy that couldn't make its owner proud.

A curve made its way to philipia's lips.

Once they arrived, they saw a couple of movers leaving after greeting them both.

They stood before the door and philipia couldn't help but stare at

the plate number hanged on it.

“This is your room.” she said to the giant standing behind her.

Cambodia bowed and said his thanks. He really is fortunate to come across a female leader that is nice.

Before philipia could even leave, there was a loud footsteps coming from the room and the door flung open, revealing an excited Germany.

“Goddess!?” he called, his eyes filled with admiration and worship that gave philipia a shudder.

How come she never noticed the way he looked at her before. She must've been blind.

Cambodia, who is still outside, curiously looked at the female leader. “Goddess? Is that your name? Oh! My name is Cambodia! Nice to meet you!”

Germany ignored the giant puppy and immediately kneeled in one knee before philipia.

Philipia, “??!!”

Germany, with a fervent look, said in a worshipping tone, “Goddess! It has been an endless day and night since I last saw you!! No wait! I did see you 56 times this day, 245 times this month and 4,689 times this year! Ahh! Goddess! Please forgive this humble me! I couldn't reach the perfect times of 8,888 of seeing you! I have failed you!”

Philipia stood frozen on the spot.

And Cambodia, this simpleton, must've felt like everything is natural and copied Germany who kneeled in one knee while looking at her and Germany with round curious eyes.

As she was about to make a run for it, the elevator not far from them chimed and opened. Distinct voices, but familiar, slowly got closer by the second.

“Then I met lotus! She is the most loveliest and most beautiful person! She is kind too! I'm sure you'll like her ASEAN! of course she— eh? Lotus? Lotus! You're here! Perfect timing!” Vietnam's sweet voice resounded.

Philipia didn't move nor turn her head to face the group, but Vietnam didn't mind and immediately hugged her from behind and turn to ASEAN with a beaming smile, like a child showing off his most beloved toy.

“This is her! ASEAN! This is my lotus!”

“Philipia? Why are you here?” Malaysia asked and walked to her side, only to be shocked to see Germany with worshipping eyes kneeling, and Cambodia with round curious eyes, also kneeling. “What the heck??”

“Sorry, got to go now, bye” she said and made a 180 turn and walk (ran) towards the elevator with the door still open.

But before she could reach her destination, Brunei stepped forward, as well as Singapore and a sticky Vietnam hanging behind her.

Brunei asked, “Philip, perfect timing, ASEAN is here, you should stay for dinner it isn't everyday that most members are all in one place aside from an important meeting.”

Singapore added, “Have you been well lately?”

Vietnam rub his cheek on the back of her head, hugging her even tighter, “ASEAN, come look!”

ASEAN Looked at the female leader sandwich between the group and to the two kneeling on the floor. When he saw Cambodia, he smiled, “Why are you kneeling?”

Cambodia, who didn't know what was happening and was simply going with the flow, replied, “He called her a goddess so I thought she was a deity and so I kneeled with him.”

Germany interjects, “What do you mean you thought!?”

Cambodia flinched, “Am I wrong?”

“She is a goddess!!” because the hall isn't big, Germany's voice was especially loud.

Everyone immediately turn to his direction and to philipia who remained motionless throughout the whole time.

But she was having an inner turmoil, wishing to borrow her head in the sand and never see the light of the day. If her mask is removed, they would see her blushing madly.

Indonesia sighed helplessly, “That crazy guy is Germany, I know, surprising isn't?”

ASEAN nodded, “Indeed it is.”

Philipia then gently remove Vietnam's arms around her, pat him on the chest, bowed 90 degree and made a run to the elevator, frantically pressing the button before it closed.

The group was left dumbfounded and it took a few seconds for them to realize what just happened.

Laos chuckled, “Her reading today is very good.”

Vietnam's eyes began to tear up as he ran towards the elevator that was now shut close, “Lotus!!! She left again! The school is so big that I can't see her everyday I want!”

“Leave her be Vietnam, if Philip doesn't want to, don't force her.” Brunei pulled the crying Vietnam.

Germany on the other hand punch the floor while clutching his chest, “Why does she bless me even though I'm unworthy!” he sobbed then he stood up and clasped both hands together, “Amen.”

Malaysia exclaimed, “Just stop it already! Cambodia! How long are you even gonna kneel?”

Cambodia was frightened for a second before he stood up. His height was so tall that he looked like the terminator about to kill

Germany who remained the same pose.

Cambodia scratched the back of his head shyly, “Was it wrong of me to kneel?”

“You don't have to kneel everytime you see philipia, only crazy people like him!” he pointed Germany who ignored him, “He's a worshipping maniac.”

Cambodia curiously looked at Germany who now walked back inside the room, his pose remained the same, chanting a prayer under his breath.

“He doesn't look bad?”

Malaysia shook his head and pat his arm since he can't pat his shoulder since he's tall. “Oh you poor giant cookie, you've been influenced already?”

Cambodia didn't understand but he laughed shyly, showing a dimple on his left cheek. “Still, I didn't expect I get to meet a goddess.”

Indonesia then stated, “Her name is philipia, she's also a member.”

“Oh! Oh! Is she Martial's sister?”

The group looked at him incredulously which made the giant puppy a bit nervous. Brunei asked, “How did you know?”

“Well, one time from a meeting, Sir Martial said that I reminded him of his sister, could miss philipia be that sister?”

Brunei, “Yeah.” and he was spot on when saying Cambodia reminded him of Philip. After all, they do give off the same vibe of naivete. Unfortunately, Philip grew up now.

*

Once out of her old dorm building, philipia sighed and fasten her pace lest she encounter anyone else. She turn to the back of the northwest building and inside the dense pack of trees and bushes.

Because of the accumulated snow, some of it would fall on top of her head as she walks in-between with careful steps.

It took 2 minutes before she arrived to a small open area that has a small tent in the middle. She zips the tent open and went inside.

“What took you so long anuket?” Egypt asked while wearing a protective mask, he then hand another one for the female leader who shook her head.

“I encountered the new batch of students” she paused and thought of ASEAN, “And teachers...” she added.

“Ahhh, they do come around during winter.”

“Anyways, how is it?” philipia bends down and used her knee to support her body and arm as she looked at the newly grown flytrap.

Nepal took an immobile fly with a small tweezers and placed it in the mouth of the flytrap. The two fan like shape immediately closed, earning a sound of awe from three leaders.

Flytrap: “…” /(/ /•/-/•/ /)/

Egypt beamed, “Somehow, watching such simple things are fun.”

Nepal nodded, although his face remained emotionless, there was small tinge of blush when the flytrap closed its mouth.

“I want to feed one too” philipia asked which Nepal then gave her the tweezers and opened a small box with an immobile flies inside.

She mimicked the way Nepal did it, carefully picking up the fly then brought it to the mouth or another hungry flytrap.

The mouth closed and earned another wave of ‘Ohhhh’ from the three leaders.

Second flytrap: “…” (□_□;)

Who would've thought, watching a plant eat could be so satisfying.

.. / .-.. --- ...- . / -.-- --- ..-

Chapter 28 : I almost wanted to push you against the wall and embrace you.

“So you haven't met your association leader and this was your first meeting?” Egypt asked.

Philipia sat besides him right outside the tent, looking through the dense trees surrounding them. The tent was big enough to accommodate 10 people. If one is wondering what a tent is doing here, the answer would be because of a club; Egypt's club. Although there is a school garden and school greenhouse; but because Egypt's plants are either poisonous or dangerous that he had to make himself another greenhouse made out of a tent and a heater inside.

Philipia sighed while rubbing her arm with her thumb, she said, “Brother martial never really made me attend those meetings. I didn't even know Malaysia and Indonesia before— well, I did heard about them but I never really met them personally. Not until I attended the academy.”

Egypt held his chin and wondered, “But it's weird though, why won't your brother let you attend any meetings?”

Philipia was quiet. Behind her two holed mask, she bit her lower lip as she thought of the reason. “Because I wasn't ready, and I couldn't face any other leaders. I mourned for a decade, and in those decades, I trained myself to the point my bones felt like breaking.”

Egypt nodded in understanding, he grab a handful of snow on the chair they are sitting on and shape it into a ball, “When I was little, my father once told me that there are 5 stages of grief; the first stage is denial, then anger, bargaining, depression and lastly acceptance. Although what happened in the past is really saddening, but it is also because of it that we can learn something.”

Nepal, who remained inside the tent, listened to their conversation and couldn't help but pause his work.

Philipia lowered her head, she said, “no matter. The dead has already passed, we don't have to keep on dwelling on it.”

Philipia stood up, dusted a few snow from her skirt and fixed her mask. She turn to Egypt and said, “Thanks egypt.”

“May the heavens be with you, anuket.”

Philipia smiled, although Egypt couldn't see it, he could feel it. She walked back inside the tent and wave Nepal a goodbye before she turn towards the forest.

Nepal came out of the tent, and said, “I thought there were 6 stages of grief.”

Egypt raised his brows, he asked, “What? Since when? What's the sixth?”

Nepal replied, “Revenge.”

*

Philipia walked back to her classroom and saw Atlantic sitting on her seat. Anyways, it doesn't even matter where she sits, the classroom is practically empty now, only leaving the leaders inside — well, except Japan, because he left.

He didn't leave anything, nor a note nor even took his belongings in his room. But the last person who saw him and spoke to him was her.

Philipia looked at the empty desk, imagining the cheerful Japan waving at her and would excitedly run to her and show her a few cat videos.

China saw philipia arrived and called her over. Philipia went and stood before his desk. China takes his bag and took a brown folder from it and handed it to the female leader, he explained, “The things you need to know about your ancestor.”

Philipia examines the brown folder before she takes it. China added, “And also about the thing you asked.”

Philipia nodded and thanked China before she took a sit to where Japan used to sit. She put the brown folder in her bag and leaned back on her chair.

The classroom didn't have any civilian students, just 6 leaders sitting there, waiting for something, or simply killing time.

Spain put his phone away and observed philipia's back. No matter how obvious it was, he couldn't bring himself to talk about it. Philipia finally took her last baptism, and only a few people can tell — including him.

But of course she wouldn't tell him. He had no right from the very beginning anyways...

Perhaps she couldn't handle the silence or the piercing look from behind, philipia stood up, took her bag and left.

South finally woke up and caught a glimpse of philipia leaving. Hurriedly, he grab his things and ran after the female leader and cried out, “Wait for me!”

Philipia paused in her steps and waited for South Korea. When he came out, he didn't forget to give Atlantis a middle finger and slam the door close.

Atlantis scoffed and rolled his eyes and continued to play on his phone.

South Korea chuckled and walked next to Philipia, “I hated the fact that he's our classmate. I really can't stand him!”

Philipia responded insipidly, “You just have to ignore him.”

South Korea rebukes, “I can't! Just his presence alone can already ruin my whole mood!”

They turn right and walk down the stairs, philipia replied, “We can't do anything about it. He was placed there by the school.”

South Korea groaned, “I hate him.”

When they arrive at the last step, philipia faced South who is still on the stairs, “Why do you hate him?”

South Korea raised a brow, as though looking at her with a look of ‘Do you have to ask?’ expression. “Cause he dirtied my lunch and he screwed someone at the equipment room.”

Philipia place her hand under her chin, she reasoned, “What if he didn't do any of those? Would you still hate him?”

South Korea opened his mouth but couldn't give a reply. He thought for a moment and did think that, if they didn't caught him screwing someone and dusted their food, he might be just another annoying leader who thinks he's above all. Like a mixture of Egypt's pride and Tethys' arrogance.

“No, I'd still hate him.” he replied with a deadpan look.

Philipia didn't say anymore and resumed her walk.

South Korea hurriedly chased after and matched her pace, “What about you? Don't you dislike him?”

Philipia replied, “No. I don't think he's that bad, at least he doesn't really bother anyone that much.”

South Korea asked, “But he dusted his hand on our lunch!”

Philipia said, “That was just one time. A single action doesn't really define a person.”

South Korea criticize, “It's enough for me to define him though. Tch! Whatever! Everyone is the same! Everyone is born equal!”

Philipia paused on her steps and chuckled. It was the first time in a long time south korea heard her laugh which was as soft and dreamy as ever. Philipia said, “If everyone is equal, leaders like us wouldn't exist.”

South Korea replied, “You have a point.”

They continued on their walk before south Korea went to the other dormitory while philipia walked to hers. When she entered the teachers dormitory, she saw ASEAN and her uncle talking.

ASEAN was facing the entrance so he immediately saw the youth standing there. He gave her a warm and kind smile, and greeted, “Hello philipia. This is our official meeting, I'm pleased to meet you at last.”

Philipia recalled their first meeting. Her lips couldn't help but twitch a few times, fortunately the mask covers it. Philipia walked over and bowed slightly, “Pleasure to meet you professor ASEAN, I apologize about earlier.”

ASEAN laughed while he held his chest, his laughter was soft and gentle. Philipia studied the professor before her and gave him a big thumbs up.

Look Maharlika, there's another you. Philipia thought.

Maharlika shakes his head and chuckled.

ASEAN wore a golden glasses, dressed in a dark green suit with a hanging hourglass as an accessory around his necktie, giving off a soft sound of clinking like a chime everytime he moves.

ASEAN said, “I don't mind, I was amused actually.”

Jack looked at the two back and forth and couldn't help his curiosity winning over, “What happened? When did you two met?”

ASEAN gave him a short explanation of what happened. Jack, scrunched up his face and berated, “Those damned students. Especially that Germany, he just won't sit still and behave.”

ASEAN agreed, “It is really surprising.”

Philipia stood besides her uncle and listened to them talk, but after enduring for a while, she asked, “Uhm... may I go up now?”

ASEAN Looked at her and couldn't help but laugh helplessly, “Hahaha, two old people talking really isn't fun right?”

Philipia hurriedly explained, “No, it's not. It's just, I'd like to rest.”

Jack consents, “Alright, go and take a warm bath and take a rest.” he dusted off a few snowflakes off her hair and caught a glimpse of a yellow hair clip on the side.

Philipia nodded at the two and went towards the elevator. When the door opened with a chime, ASEAN called behind her, “Philipia”

Philipia held the door of the elevator and turned around, “Yes professor?”

“If you have time, you can come to the dormitory where we first met. let's all have dinner.”

Philipia looked at the kind smile from the man. She was quiet for a second and replied, “I'll see if I could go...”

ASEAN nodded and faces jack again.

Philipia walked inside the elevator and stared at the figures before they disappeared behind the metallic door and replaced by her reflection. Two holes staring back at her.

Philipia these days was like a worn out doll. Often times, she's just tired, exhausted or perhaps melancholic. She looked at the world that she once viewed as a bright place with laughter.

But after going through so much. She doesn't even know if this world was the same one she always viewed.

She was first sent as a spy, then she begged to stop before she sold her freedom for a temporary relief. These few years at the academy made her realize that she doesn't even know what she's doing. She doesn't know what's right or wrong anymore, she can't save the people she cherish, she can't save the common people— though, she can't say the same words ever again.

Philipia sighed, taking off of her mask and took a deep breath in.

“what have I been doing?”

That question was either for her or for Maharlika who remained quiet.

When the elevator issued a chime, the door opened. Unexpectedly, she saw someone standing by the door and couldn't help but pause her steps.

She unconsciously tried to look up who it was but remembered her bare face. Philipia quickly wore the mask and bowed in apology to the person without looking at them and squeezed herself to the side and hasten her pace.

“Miss philipia.” the person called. His tone seems to carry a smile.

Philipia paused and turn around, her head still lowered, trying to avoid eye contact as much as possible.

Philipia replied, “Yes sir?”

The person chuckled before they walk towards her and stop with just an arm away. They called again, “Miss philipia.”

Philipia replied once more, “Yes sir.” her tone neither warm nor cool.

“When you talk to someone, you look at them in the eyes, am I wrong?”

Philipia took a deep breath and raised her head, staring face to face with professor Reich.

Third Reich smiled, “Have you been well? Although there aren't much class these days, why do you still insist on attending rather than resting?”

Philipia replied, “I did plan to stop until the class resumed.”

Third Reich poke the forehead of the mask, “Don't sound so solemn. I'm merely asking.”

Philipia said, “Yes sir.”

Third Reich sighed and shrugged. What can he do when a student is so well behave? He turn to his heel and press the button of the elevator, “Anyways, I was just checking on my student.”

The elevator chimed and opened. Just as philipia thought she's freed from her eccentric professor, third Reich added, “Oh! by the way.”

She looked at him, half of his body out of the elevator, giving her a smile that didn't look like a smile.

“You better be careful about your eyes, lest someone sees it. Take your mask off only when you're in your room, it's dangerous— I almost wanted to push you against the wall and embrace you.”

Philipia: …

Maharlika: What the! Harassment! Harassment!!!

Third Reich was oblivious to the angry Maharlika, who already cursed him ten thousand times, went back inside the elevator.

Philipia held her temple from the angry and loud Maharlika before she went to her room.

Anyways, she doesn't get affected by those words anymore. She heard and experience something much awful than those.

Philipia changed to a comfortable clothes and looked at herself in the mirror. The jewel like eyes stared back, like a billion crystals is hiding behind it. Extremely beautiful and extremely enchanting.

Trash... They're just trash.

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Chapter 29 : Tu me manques.

Philipia looked at the falling snow through the window. Pressing a finger on the glass pane, she wrote a word with a character that doesn't seem to exist.

Poland approached her from behind and said, “Philips, I've finished reading it.”

Philipia replied without looking back, “What do you think?”

Poland looked at the papers in his hand again then looked at Canada and France sitting across him. He said solemnly, “I don't like it...”

Canada and France both nodded, France said, “Not only do I don't like it, I also hate it. Its... it's dangerous.”

Philipia leaned on the window and looked at them, her hand resting on her lap while both thumbs fiddling each other, “I don't need you to like it. I showed it to you to share my plans. Brother martial is getting stronger, who knows who or what connection he has. If I could...”

‘SLAM!’

The three looked at canada who stood up, both hands on the table that made the sound, “If you could what?! syrup, not only are you bargaining something from you, you're also throwing something from you!”

“I've thrown it since the very beginning. There's no difference.”

Canada shouts, “No! I don't agree! This plan is... it's not good!”

France sighed, Poland shrinks his head between his shoulders. Philipia looked at Canada with red rims on his eyes while tears threatening to spill.

Philipia reasoned, “Canada... it's either that or... everyone dies.”

Canada didn't even hesitate to reply, “Then let everyone die! I will die! I would rather die than see you get hurt!”

Poland tried to shrink his presence as small as possible, listening to a live confession somehow makes him feel a bit awkward.

Maharlika screamed, “Make him shut up!”

Philipia rub the side of her temple and said, “I appreciate your feelings, but now isn't the time.”

Canada didn't seem to mind the blatant rejection and insisted, “No! I will never participate in such an act! Syrup, there's tons of ways to do it!”

“Then tell me...”

Canada widen his eyes, he paused and stuttered for a bit. “Well, we could...I mean... we can just secretly invade his office and...”

This time, it was France who replied, “We've been through that. But, even if we did successfully infiltrate their house and his mansion, martial would still be able to notice it. Not only would he notice it, he would even change his own plan. Which is like chasing after something that keeps changing, it's no use.”

“Then we'll plant a spy!”

“A spy? The only person whom he talks to is mark, their secretary and caretaker. Not only is he loyal, he's even more adamant to deny our request to spy on his leader!”

France and Canada bickered back and forth. Philipia endured and endured, she said, “Just stop.”

Both men stopped and obediently remained quiet, philipia continued, “I'll give you guys more time to think about it.”

Philipia walked around the table and added, “Oh and... Tell the others about it too. I can't seem to find the others...”

After that, she left.

Poland look at the two, pack up his things and followed after.

Canada slumped on his seat and sighed, “I don't want to lose syrup...”

France looked at his nephew and couldn't help but ask the question he's been meaning to ask. “Why do you love her?”

Canada replied insipidly, “Do you need a reason to love someone?”

France soften his eyes and couldn't help but recall a memory that he longed buried deep in his heart. He mumbled, “No... you don't. Because the moment you looked at her, you were already falling.”

Canada looked at his uncle with a rare look of surprise on his face, “Sounds like you've been through something similar.”

France replied, “I did.”

Canada was curious, picking up the papers on the table, he takes his phone out and contacted the others about his syrup's plan. “oh? Do tell, I've never heard you talk about your love life despite being a sex addict.”

France scoffed, “That was before. I was young and wild, one who didn't know better.”

Canada said, “Then tell me. Who was this person that made you make such a face?”

France furrowed his eyebrows and held his face, “What? What face am I making?”

After texting the others, Canada looked at his uncle, he replied, “The face of a lovelorn fool.” because he does that face all the time. Loving someone so obsessively yet was denied the opportunity to receive an answer.

France was surprised, then pursed his lips. “Yeah, that sums up my lovelife. Unrequited, and was also left behind.”

Canada, who was cleaning the table, paused and looked at his uncle incredulously, “Yikes...”

“Unlike you! I was still able to kiss and hug her! What about you? You've only been chasing after her and hug her!”

Canada was hit on the sore spot, he angrily refuted, “So?! It's because I respect syrup! I know what I should do and what I shouldn't do!”

France scoffed pathetically at him, “Coward. When you like someone, you must push forward! Do what you have to do!”

Canada, “what coward? I'm just being patient!”

France stood up and crossed his arms, “You like philipia right?”

Canada looked at him suspiciously but replied, “Very much.”

France said, “Then you should pursue her like a normal person. Use this winter where everyone is hiding in their room to warm up and take that chance before she slips away.”

Canada rolls his eyes and went to his room, “If that is so useful and effective why are you still single? Why is the woman you liked left you and was only able to hug and kiss her?”

France was rendered speechless, “This isn't about me!”

“Yeah sure! Whatever! I'm going to sleep and dream about syrup! If I have the time, I'll talk to her tomorrow and disagree to that stupid freaking plan!”

‘BAM!’

France was given a face of a close door. He rub his nose and went to his room. Closing the door behind him. He glanced at his study table where a picture frame rest.

When he went with philipia and found her father's secret club, he took a quick picture of a worn out photo of a woman sitting on a rock.

He picks up the picture frame and caress the frame. His eyes filled with tenderness, his hand soft and gentle. It was as if he wasn't holding a thing, but someone's face as he trails his finger on their eyes, nose bridge, and lips.

“Supposedly, it would have been effective if she didn't ran away...”

In his memories, before that person left, he was about to confess to her and asked her hand in marriage. But in a blink of an eye. A riot started, causing the people to panic. In that crowd, people who wore colorful clothes, her black dress and black veil was conspicuous that he instantly found her.

But before he could reach out his hand, she disappeared. Like a falling leaf that would momentarily brush itself against your skin.

It was but a long and sad love story.

France smiled, his eyes glistening as he looked at the photo. He doesn't know where or how she escape and keep herself hidden, but the fact that he began to miss her again is the truth.

He already moved on damn it. Why did she have to leave an evidence that she still existed which reminded him once again.

“My dame... Tu me manques.”

*

Philipia walked at the side of the road, she looked at the winter filled city of Tethyria. She looked at the bustling street, the bustling side road, the bustling malls and shops.

She looked at them and thought. *They can move on so fast.*

As she was walking with a destination in mind, she heard a small voice calling her from behind. “Miss leader!”

Philipia stop on her tracks and followed the voice. It was a little girl with rose cheeks, dressed in thick cotton dress with a bonnet and scarf that seems a little to big for her small face.

“Hello” she greeted.

The little girl smiled and hands her a white winter flower. This winter flower usually grows in during the cold season.

The little girl explained, “In our country, giving out winter flowers is the same way as saying, have a wonderful cold day!”

Philipia smiled and move aside her mask, showing only her nose and lips before saying, “Thank you. I like it very much.”

The little girl was momentarily in a daze. Although only half of Philipia's face was shown, it was somehow enough to let the little girl know that this miss leader is pretty.

The little girl nodded shyly before running and approached another stranger and gave them a winter flower.

Philipia fixed her mask again and resumed her walk. She examined the winter flower and couldn't help but put it on her ear.

When was the last time she wore a sampaguita again?

Philipia walked to a quiet neighborhood and arrived to a particular house. She stood on the porch and was about to knock on the door when she heard someone arguing.

“Did I come in a bad time?” she asked herself.

The argument was short but it was followed by a sound of something breaking, then a door slammed shut. Philipia was about to leave and come back later, but the front door suddenly opened and a woman with disheveled hair and messy make up that her lipstick was smudge, appeared before her.

The woman was surprised for a second before she gathered her dress and left in haste.

“Ah, pearl, you came.” Greg came out and greeted her.

Philipia looked at the departing figure of the woman and asked, “Are you not gonna chase after her?”

Greg sighed tiredly, “Just ignore her.”

But philipia asked, “Who's she?”

Greg tried to construct a better word to describe who that woman was, but after a while, he couldn't come up with anything at all and just told her truthfully, “A one night stand.”

Philipia reacted calmly, “Oh.”

Greg chuckled and ruffled her hair, “Come in, it's freezing.”

Philipia walks inside and remove her scarf and coat and hang it on the stand. “Brother Greg, she left something.”

Greg, who was walking towards the kitchen, paused and turn to where philipia was pointing.

On the couch, there was a purple and black sexy lingerie underwear. He insipidly made an ‘oh’, picked it up and dropped it on the trashcan.

Maharlika: My goodness...

Philipia then walk over towards the kitchen and saw that her brother is actually in the middle of cooking. “Brother greg, what do you think about being Armageddon's descendant?”

Philipia took a sit on a high stool by the counter. She placed her elbows on the counter and rest her chin on her palm.

When Greg heard her question, he raised a brow and took a knife, “At first, I felt cool like I'm a main character from a book. But then, when I heard of what happened to you and what happened to our ancestors, it kind of threw me off.”

Philipia soften her eyes, she asked, “Then, did you hated me when you saw my eyes?”

Greg didn't even hesitate, “No. it only felt like I was being choked. Made me think it was you who hated me.”

Philipia was quiet for a moment, she replied, “I did...”

The knife on Greg's hand flinched. He looked at the half cut carrot on the cutting board before he nonchalantly saying, “I deserve it, for leaving you guys.”

“It wasn't your fault. But, even now, I still hate you a bit.”

“And I love you too, pearl.”

Philipia rest the upper part of her body. She smiled behind the mask, she said, “You're confident I still love you brother Greg?”

Greg replied, “If you don't, you can just not visit me at all.”

Philipia asked, “What if I still hate you so much yet I'm still visiting you?”

Greg puts the carrot aside and chopped the potatoes next, “Then you can just pretend to still love me. In fact, I don't deserve it, nor do I deserve Mama's either.”

“Mama's love for you is different from mine. Because she died without you.”

Those word jabbed at Greg's heart and couldn't help but sigh dejectedly, “Alright, I'm an asshole.”

“You are... But mama would've told me to forgive you.”

Thinking about their mother, Greg's eyes soften, even his voice became gentle, “That sounds like mama would say. She would say the same thing to me and martial whenever we fight... Physically.”

Philipia then hung her head and said in a rather monotonous tone, “Will she also forgive me if I killed brother martial?”

The sound of chopping stopped, but the kettle began to boil and issued a whistling sound.

Philipia continued, “Will she also understand me if... I still hate you so much?”

Greg made a low chuckle. He placed the knife down and wiped his hands with his apron, he said with a chest full of heartache.

“Pearl, my little sister. We've failed you as a brother, didn't we?”

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Chapter 30 : Calling me 'love' that only lovers would call.

Philipia replied casually, “I've been disappointed since the beginning.”

Greg looked at her, feeling a bit of a loss on what to do. He didn't know what to say to this youth who hides her face.

Philipia still continued to speak, “Ever since you left, ever since Tito misunderstood, ever since I found out about brother martial's feelings, ever since I discovered papa's secret... and ever since I was baptized.”

Greg said, “Why? It was your baptism! Every leader should be proud of it. It's an honor for a leader to get through their last baptism!”

Philipia replied displeased, “But what's the point? I couldn't save anyone!”

Greg sighed and held her shoulders, trying to calm her down as he sensed her agitated mood. “Alright, alright, whatever you say. But a leader, cannot be disappointed at their own baptism, pearl. It's the same as saying you're disappointed to a child who chose you.”

Philipia sat back down, “And so? Does it matter if this country chose me?”

Greg turn to the kettle and switched the fire off. He said, “Pearl. I won't argue about how you felt about us, but you can't say that.”

Philipia remained silent. Neither agreeing or rejecting.

Greg made a cup of hot cocoa and placed it in front of the youth. “Think about it first.”

Philia shakes her head. Her answer was as clear as day.

Greg sighed before he resumed his cooking.

Philia stared at the cocoa and cupped it with her hands. The warmth transferring to her ice cold hands. “This is why I hate you...” she whispered before moving her mask slightly to the side and took a sip.

The cocoa, was sweet.

*

Three days later.

Philipia saw moving trucks parked on the side of dormitory building 5.

“My god. More leaders are coming, surprise, surprise I guess.”

Philipia glanced at America who changed his sunglasses to a rimless glasses. Sensing her gaze, america gave her a smile, “Does it suit me?”

Philipia nodded, “I can see your blue eyes.”

America stilled for a second. He teased, “Do you like my eyes?” although he was just casually asking, but philipia really did think his eyes are beautiful.

Philipia replied, “I do. They're like the ocean and the sky.”

America laughed cheerfully, it was obvious his mood brightened even more, “Then from now on, I'll wear these glasses instead.”

Philipia gave him another nod, “Okay.”

Philipia looks back at the moving trucks and watched a few people coming in and out while carrying boxes.

All of a sudden, they heard a gasp from behind. Both america and philipia turn around and saw a leader standing there with a basket full of winter flowers.

“it's greenla--”

“Miss fairy! Golly! It's so nice of you to greet me! How did you know I'm arriving today?”

Greenland bypassed america and stood in front of philipia with a beaming smile and beaming eyes.

Philipia never really thought it was Greenland who was coming, she was only curious after she caught sight of a moving truck when walking back to her dorm.

Greenland continued to speak, “I've been walking around the whole academy, hoping to meet and greet any leaders I come across. But since earlier, I was only able to greet Laos, Malaysia, indonesia and Finland and Estonia.” he paused and glanced at America. He took a winter flower and shoved it on his hands and quickly said, “Hi nice to meet you america, I'm Greenland, just call me greenie!” after saying that, he turned to face philipia and added, “Oh, and also America, I just greeted him. Heh~”

America was dumbfounded but held the winter flower in his arms. “uhhh... sure, nice to meet you too.” he said, though, Greenland was focused on the female leader.

Philipia unknowingly smiled. She then took a winter flower herself and said, “Nice to see you too greenie. Welcome to Pangaea academy.”

Greenland's eyes sparkled even more that even philipia was dazzled by it.

Greenland said, “Oh! By the way! I came with two new leaders too!”

America, this time, sighed, “Great, two new leaders? Ireland and Scotland already left, why did this school filled in another two again?” he looked at Greenland who still had that huge smile, “Three... I meant three.” he corrected himself.

Greenland gave a jolly laughter, “Gathering a lot of leaders can really be a handful, I can agree with you! Anyways! You don't mind

touring me around right?”

America didn't mind, so did philipia. Thus, the three of them walked around the school with philipia leading the way and america explaining to him each and every building, as well as telling him a few advice.

When they got to the north garden, they saw a person laying on the ground while the snow almost covered them completely.

Greenland screamed while america already went to their side. It was only philipia who calmly followed after them.

Greenland worriedly ask, “Are they okay? Are they dead?! Omg— there's a dead person in the school!”

America explained, “Calm down, he's not dead he's...” he looked at the man laying on the snow and said, “He's sleeping...”

Greenland ‘ooh’-ed and said, “If you kiss him, will he wake up?”

America looked at Greenland weirdly, “What the hell are you even talking about? Just shake him up, he'll wake up.”

The person in topic groaned in his sleep. His body moved for a bit before his eyes fluttered open, revealing a pair of green, red and orange eye color that reminded philipia of a storm weather radar.

The man sat upright and looked at the three people looking at him with a blank expression. He softly asked, “Who... are you?”

Greenland was the first to snap out of it and reach for his hand, “Hi! My name is Greenland! Nice to meet you!”

The man accepted the handshake and introduce himself, “Antarctica. You can call me Anta.”

Greenland grinned, “Ohhhh!!! Anta! Golly, you scared us back there, we really thought you were dead!”

Antarctica scratch his head, “I'm used to the cold, I saw that this place was empty and I fell unknowingly fell asleep.”

America stood up and dusted the snow on his knees, “Great, another one. Hey, since you're here, does it mean your brother is too?”

Antarctica also stood up and nodded, “He's attending as a professor.”

The reason America knew he had a brother was because of his name which reminded America of him. Although he hasn't met Antarctica, he did meet his brother in one of a gathering.

Greenland said, “You have a brother? that's so great! I'm an only child!” he points himself.

Antarctica didn't know what to say to it so he said, “I'm sorry if you're an only child.”

Philipia: …

America: …

Greenland didn't mind his honesty and wave his hand, dismissing it casually, “Hahhahhahaha! That's fine, that's fine! Hey! Let's be friends yeah? I'm also a transfer here and just arrived today!”

Antarctica nodded. He really didn't care who was who.

“Oh? You found him! Haha!” a voice said behind them.

Philipia was the first to turn around and saw a man whose 30% similar to Antarctica but with bright silver eyes.

The person added, “My brother had always been a simpleton and easily deceived. Thanks for looking out for him.”

Greenland asked, his eyes brimming with curiosity, “And you are?”

America called, “Sup, Arctic.”

Arctic council smiled in greeting to america, his eyes then landed on philipia. “A female leader, I was told about you. Hello, my name is arctic council, just call me arctic.”

Philipia nodded and replied, “Philipia. You may call me whatever you want.”

Arctic council chuckled and said, “What do you think we should call her anta?” he looked at his brother.

Antarctica looked at the youth, staring at the two holed mask. His expression reminded philipia as though he was on the verge of sleeping.

Greenland raised his hand, “I call her miss fairy! By the way! I'm Greenland, you may call me greenie!”

Arctic was amused by his enthusiasm and accepted the handshake, “Pleasure to meet you.”

“Polar bear.” Antarctica spoke, catching their attention.

Arctic council placed his hand under his chin, contemplating for a moment before he nodded, “That's cute, from now on we'll call you polar bear, okay? Polar bear?”

Philipia didn't really mind and gave a nod, she said insipidly, “Sure.”

America chuckled and couldn't help but ruffle her hair.

Arctic then said, “anyways, me and my brother still have things to do. How about you come with us Greenie? We've just transferred today, it's only good manners and right conduct if we greet the principal— I heard she's a beauty.” he wiggled his eyebrows at the last part.

Greenland turned to philipia and america then to Antarctica and Arctic. For a while, he was in a dilemma.

One is miss fairy who was very nice and kind while the other is his new friend! So hard to choose!

Philipia saw his hesitation and thought that this man is too humble to reject a kind offer. She said, “You can go with them Greenie, I forgot I still have things to do.”

Maharlika stated, “No you don't.”

Philipia ignored him.

Greenland looked at philipia, “Eh? Really? T-then. I'll go with my new friend Anta and his bro then.”

Philipia nodded, “Okay, see you then.”

Greenland beamed and waved goodbye, “I'll see ya around!”

After the three left, america and philipia was left in the north garden.

America used his hands as a pillow while standing, he said, “That guy's expression says his thoughts. He's so obvious like an open book.”

He looked back and saw philipia staring at the tree at the middle of the north garden. He called, “What are you looking at?”

Philipia pointed to a certain branch, america followed after it and saw a blooming flower.

He smiled and walked closed to it, his feet sinking on the soft snow beneath. Taking his phone, he took a picture and said, “This is a good sign, hahaha! A flower blooming in winter.”

Philipia said, “You already have a winter flower in your hand.”

America replied, “That's different. winter flowers bloom during winter, but what about this? This blooms during summer. Thus, it's a good auspicious sign.”

Philipia asked, “You believe in those? Like how you believe Laos' tarot reading?”

America looks back and said, “Hey! You also ask for his reading?”

Philipia didn't ask but was given one against her will. But she replied with a; “Yes, I did.”

America grinned, his small tiger teeth showing, “Hahaha! Don't you think it's cool though? Real or not, I enjoy these kinds of things.”

Philipia looked at the man with a complicated gaze. America had always been a cheerful person, she's been spending a lot of time with him that she often forgets that the man before her, was the man who caused her father to die.

Even so... There's something inside her that refuse to admit that she does hate him just a bit. But what makes her refuse her own feelings? What makes her reluctant to look away from his face?

He just saw a single flower blooming during winter that usually blooms in summer, he's already so happy as though he saw something amazing.

Philipia couldn't look away and remained to where she stood. Because she was still as a statue, a few snow had been gathering on her shoulder and head.

America noticed philipia who was silent. He walked back, asking with concern, “Hey, are you okay?”

“Joe, you once called me ‘mahal’, why is that?” because she's been thinking too much, she blurted our these words.

America was taken aback. He thought for a moment and said, “I don't know. It would just come out of me whenever I see you?”

Philipia asked, “Do you know the meaning behind it?”

America shook his head, “What is it?”

Philipia opened her mouth and answered, “You've been calling me ‘love’”

America widen his eyes. The times he called her repeated in his head like a movie in fast-forward. It was like a bombed had been dropped in his head and heart.

Philipia added another bombed, she stated, “You've been calling me ‘love’ that only lovers would call.”

There was silence between them. You could only hear the sound of the cold howl of the breeze, as well as America's loud beating heart.

After a moment, he opened his mouth and asked, “Do you hate it?”

Philipia asked herself. Does she hate it? Thinking back to the time where she was still the oblivious and naive her. She never once felt like she disliked it, in fact, Everytime he calls her that nickname.

Her heart would rapidly beat a lot.

She answered, her voice barely audible as though she's answering herself, “No. I don't dislike it...”

The winter season in Tethyria was cold, but America felt like his cheek, nape, and ears were so hot, it was flushing red.

But as though he was possessed, he took a step closer, took her right arm and kissed the back of her hand.

When philipia felt Japan kissed her palm, all she felt was embarrassment and wanted to yank her hand back, but when America did it. She remained still and let him press his lips on it.

His kiss was filled with passion and devotion that even made philipia a little bit breathless.

After a moment, philipia snapped out of it and stepped back, pulling her hand back. “Um... I still have, something to do.”

She didn't wait for his response and quickly turn to her heel and left the north garden.

Unknowingly, on the second floor of the northwest building, Russia stood behind the window. His eyes were half lidded as he looked at the center of the garden.

America stood there alone, his body still facing the way where philipia run off to.

Kazakhstan was standing besides him. He inhaled sharply and couldn't help but feel bad for his friend. He awkwardly said, “Uhh...

I'm sure he did it like some sort of a greeting...”

Russia walked away and left a single sentence, “You don't need to lie to me...”

Kazakhstan shrugged helplessly and followed after the Russian giant. He should've just remain quiet and shut his mouth, damn it.

Russia walked in the empty hallway, his hands inside his suit jacket. But only he, himself know, that both hands were curled into a fist that his veins is already bulging out.

Either from anger, frustration... Or the intense feeling of unwillingness and jealousy.

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Chapter 31 : Then, she lifted her veil.

Philipia looked at the blueprint on her hand and to Germany and Greece reconstructing the tank.

Right now, they are back at the secret underground that they found. Although many of them came, philipia made sure that they came undetected. After all, this place is the least place martial would focus on.

But in order to prevent catching so much attention, they used a private boat and sailed at night, arriving towards maria making island without taking any detour.

Italy walk over to Greece and Germany. He said with an annoyed tone, “Do you think the tanks I brought are defectives!?”

After Kati died and lihim disappeared. Italy continued and brought the other tanks before he stopped when the underground was already filled.

Greece scoffed and turn to him, “Of course it is! Who knows what kind of damages they have? you yourself admitted that these were all taken when they were damaged and thrown away!”

Italy clicked his tongue, he berated, “Well I fixed it!”

Greece raised a brow, he rebuked, “Well your mechanical skill sucks.”

France, at the side, gave a ‘pfft’, before feigning a cough.

Malaysia and Indonesia, who, for the first time, saw so many tanks and weapons, laughed out loud.

Italy's eyebrow twitched many times, he defend, “At that time, I was even fixing some of them in the middle of the battlefield.”

Greece replied, “That's nothing to be proud of. It still sucks, look, Germany's been fixing a lot of errors in the tank. That is why they won't start!”

Italy gave a ‘hmp!’. Turning his heel, he went back to the meeting room where the rest of the others were at, along with Jack and Greg.

Greece sticks his tongue out at his departing back before resuming his work. Germany looked at Greece and scolded, “You shouldn't be arguing with him.”

Greece criticized, “Why can't I?”

Germany looked at his goddess sitting on one of the tanks, looking through the papers her father left. He cleared his throat and said with a severe tone, “Because it's a sin. The goddess doesn't like it.”

The goddess philipia: …

Why can't they just fight without including her?

Greece looked at Germany's serious expression. He said, “What the heck are you even talking about? Just do your work!”

Philipia gathered the papers and got down from the tank. She went towards the room where Egypt, Nepal, and Canada are, sorting the gold and other stones loitering around.

Canada saw her and gave a wave, “Syrup! Look look! I found a yellow diamond! It's like your eyes!”

Philipia walked towards them and examined the yellow diamond on his hand. She said, “It does.” and she's tempted to throw it and break it apart.

Egypt explained, “To actually own such a yellow diamond, you have to dig in dangerous areas— which made me curious as to where your father and his club members got it. Anuket, I've actually located where most of these stones were taken.”

She asked, “Where?”

Egypt smiled proudly, “My country!”

Nepal: …

Canada: …

Philipia: …

Egypt noticed their silence and asked, “What?”

Canada coughed and said, “Then. Do you want it back?”

Egypt scoffed, looking at Canada with contempt, “Do you think I'm so petty as to retrieve what was taken from me a hundred years ago?”

Nepal and Canada both nodded.

Egypt looked at them in disbelief, “You really think I'm that petty?! Phe! You're all mongrels indeed!”

Egypt resumed sorting with an angry pout.

Canada and Nepal looked at each other before they glanced at philipia who remained quiet.

Philipia saw their expression. She said, “Leave it be.”

Both Nepal and Canada obediently nodded their heads and resumed sorting.

“I'll be at the meeting room if you need me.”bshe said.

Canada smiled and replied, “Alright~”

Philipia went to the meeting room. When she arrived, she saw Greg looking at the group picture that she brought.

She walked up behind him, Greg said, “This woman” he pointed lihim with a black veil.

He explained, “I once saw her with lola. I don't know what they were talking about, but lola was crying at that time.”

Philipia perked up, “Did you see her face? Or heard her voice?”

Greg tried to recall every detail that occured that day but shook his head, “I didn't see her face nor heard her voice, but she would often appear out of nowhere, usually in the forest and she would only meet lola.”

Philipia glanced at the picture again, she asked, “Then what about the others here? Do you know any one of them?”

Greg nodded, “This guy” he pointed at the man at the end wearing only a white garment on his lower body, half hugging a woman on his side. “His name is agapito. he's a close friend of papa, he often visited us before but when his wife died, he stopped. That's why you never met him.”

Philipia nodded understandingly, she asked, “Is that her second wife?” she pointed the woman whom he's half hugging.

This time, it was Jack who replied, he spread the papers on the table behind them, “That is Amalia. His sister. She had a crush on me and confessed to me after beating 5 men in front of me before.”

Greg cringed and asked, “Are you okay?”

Jack looked at him with a deadpan expression, “Yes, I rejected her and wanted to beat me but she couldn't beat me and ended up losing to me.”

Philipia took the photo again and glanced at Italy whose sitting not far from them. She said, “Then this man on the burnt part is you, right?”

Italy looked at her from his shoulder, “So?”

Greg and Jack looked at him. Jack asked, “why is it burnt? Was it an accident?”

Italy was pensive, but he replied, “Lihim burned it.”

Greg asked, “Lihim is this one right? The one with a veil?”

Italy nodded. Although they couldn't see his face, they can tell he was in low spirits after mentioning lihim.

Jack asked carefully, afraid he might've poked a sore spot, “Why?”

Italy looked at his right hand and rubbed at a certain spot, “Because she couldn't accept me as her one and only.”

At that time, they had an argument. Italy couldn't remember much about it nor what they were arguing about, but he did remember being so angry and jealous that he grabbed her roughly. The result was that she slapped his hand away and exclaimed: “Don't ever talk to me again!”

Italy narrowed his eyes, he added, “Although we were brought together... She didn't want me. She wanted Kati.”

Greg was dumbfounded, his face had a visible shock, “eh?”

Jack had the same face. If anyone knows kati, it was him. It would be impossible for any other woman to enter his eyes except Perla, so him, cheating was impossible. He'd rather believe that unicorns exist than that.

Philipia also felt the same, but she also felt like lihim simply respected kati and there were never any romance involve.

Italy turn towards the shocked leaders and mocked, “I once saw them talking privately...”

At that time. Italy wanted to get some fresh air since they've been running here and there back and forth. But when he walked towards the best place to get a breather -the beach- he saw lihim and kati talking. He couldn't hear what they were talking about and at that time, he didn't think too much about it. Everybody in the club knew they were secretive people and would often talk alone for hours before returning, and when they return, they would have another clear destination to harvest weapons or stones.

But at that time, he witnessed something he would never forget.

They seemed to have almost argued, kati turn to his heel and was

about to leave, but lihim called him back. She said something that caught his attention and faced her again. Then, she lifted her veil.

Italy was standing a bit further and hidden in the dark, he could only see Kati's shocked expression and lihims's back. Kati looked like he was so shocked that he was speechless for a long time before lihim drop her veil again.

They spoke once more before kati laughed, gave her a hug, lifted her veil and went inside it.

Although Italy didn't know what he did, but at the angle he could see, it looked like kati was kissing her. He went inside the veil which hid both of their faces.

It was at the time Italy awakened the emotion called “jealousy.”

After they parted, Kati had a flushed cheek and gave her another hug. He rub her back ever so gently before they both left with his hands wrapped around her shoulder.

Greg, Jack, philipia: …

Okay, unicorns exist now. Jack thought.

Greg exclaimed, “That's impossible! Papa would never cheat on mama!”

Italy rolled his eyes, “How is it cheating? Your mom has been long dead when that happened.”

Greg was still unwilling to believe his father would do that, he insisted, “Even so! He would never! Have you read his letter? The one pearl found? He clearly stated he did it all for mama! Papa would never betray her!”

Italy didn't continue to argue with him, he said, “Lihim was never close with anyone. And when Kati died, it was her who cried the most. I was there...” he glanced at philipia, “We were there, but you already ran away before she arrived.” he said to her.

Philipia pursed her lips and looked at the photo once more. She

studied her father's face on it and lihim.

If what Italy saw was really the truth. Was lihim also loved by her father? Because they all know, when Kati loves someone, he would love them wholeheartedly. Giving his all to them, giving up his all for them.

Greg gritted his teeth before he stormed out of the room.

Jack sighed, supported his body by the table, he said, “It doesn't really matter. Kati is dead and so is Perla. I'm sure he's being beaten there now.”

Philipia nodded and placed the photo back down.

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Chapter 32 : You're right, I slept with her.

The lights flickered as the snow outside grew stronger. Philipia couldn't help but look up at the lights and outside the floor to ceiling window.

“The news said there'll be a storm coming in 3 days. I better go out for groceries. You coming with me niece?” Jack, who was at the kitchen, untied his apron.

Philipia gave a nod.

Jack reminded, “Wear something thick.”

Philipia went to her room and wore a thick heavy coat, gloves and a scarf.

When they went down, they saw the snow already blocking a bit of the entrance that even the glass door had already formed a thick layer of frost. Jack held Philipia's hand and they both went out by pushing the door with a little bit of strength, just enough to push the snow blocking the way.

Nobody spoke, because every time they breath, it's like breathing ice in their throat. Once they arrive to the school store, they saw a few leaders already forming a line.

Arctic greeted, “Hello, are you here to take your groceries for today?”

Philipia nodded, “Yes.”

Jack breaths in and stood in front of the heater, even rubbing his hands with his gloves together. “The storm in this country is quite severe. I hate it.”

Arctic replied, “Or so I heard.”

Whilst the two spoke. Antarctica approached philipia and made her wear an earmuffs. He said, with a slight drag on his words, “You wear it... it's warm.”

Philipia held the earmuffs and did feel like her freezing ears were slightly getting warmer. Though, her hearing was a bit muffled, but all in all; it was comfortable.

“Thank you” she said.

Antarctica gave a slight nod and went to another leader and gave them an earmuffs.

When it was their turn, they went inside and took the necessities they needed. New Zealand saw philipia taking a basket and couldn't help but walk over. He said, while habitually pushing his glasses. “Philipia, do you want help?”

Philipia was about to reject his offer but Jack interrupted and shove two basket to him and said, “Ah yeah, can you put the things in the basket from this list? Thanks a lot.” after that, he took philipia's hand and went the other direction.

New Zealand stood there, carrying two empty basket and a long list of groceries: …

Australia, who wasn't far, wanted to laugh. But if he does, his brother will beat him up so he held it back with a cough.

New Zealand already saw his expression but merely gave him a glare.

Jack pulled philipia to the meat section. She stood there and waited for her uncle doing his business as he poke a meat here and there, mumbling ‘this isn't tender, this is too hard.’

Like a good girl, she waited and followed after him whenever he takes even just one or two steps forward.

Jack realize he's holding his niece back, he said, “why don't you go and get your own groceries? you can take your time.”

Philipia acquiesced and gave the basket to him as she went ahead and explore the huge store. The school store was the same as any other stores. But it is only larger and bigger, it even has 6 floors with different varieties to choose from. Not only does the school has things from Tethyria. But it also has things from different countries. From A to Z, inside the school store had all the leaders needed.

Philipia went to the second floor and search for her country's name, but paused in her step and went to the ‘R’ section, which has Russia's and two other countries: Romania and Rwanda.

She stood in front of the shelf that mostly has Russian words. Although she couldn't read, she can just look at the picture and tell if it's good or not.

But as she was about to reach for a particular snack, a tall shadow covered her from behind and reach for a different one. She saw the long slender fingers and prominent knuckles and couldn't help but admire it for a second.

“This is Sushki. I highly recommend it if you wanted to chew something soft and good.” the voice was low and husky, each word he said was like the sound of a cello, causing a low vibration.

Philipia tilted her head back and saw a pair of attractive icy blue eyes, slightly hidden from the strands of his hair and Russian hat. But because he was tall, his entire body was enough to encircle the petite philipia, which made him block the light from behind.

“Russia.” she called and said, “I haven't seen you around lately.”

This was true. Even though she would walk around the school, she would only often bump into Malaysia and Indonesia or maybe Germany and Brunei.

Russia looked at the female leader before him, thinking if he could close his arms, he would be able to wrap her entire body and pull her close to him. But alas, with much difficulty, he held himself and stepped back.

Russia said, “Here.”

Philipia accepted the Sushki snack that is inside a small and thin plastic container. She replied, “Thanks. Since Russia recommended it, it must be good.”

Russia watched her turn around and took another Sushki and place it on top of the other on her hand. He asked, “Will you be at my graduation?”

Philipia replied, “Yes, I'd like to watch.”

Russia paused before he said, “Will you allow one request of mine before I leave?”

Philipia was hesitant. She recalled the times she was with Russia, she recalled the times people would take advantage of her stupidity and couldn't do anything about it.

Maharlika whispered, even though Russia won't be able to hear him, “Say no.”

Philipia ignored the whisper in her head and answered, “It depends. As long as nobody gets hurt or...” she paused and turned around, directly facing Russia, staring at him through the two holed mask, “You won't take advantage of me.”

Maharlika: …

Russia was surprised at first but soften his eyes and nodded. His sunshine grew up. She's no longer the same but, why does it feel like his feelings just grew stronger?

“I still have things to take.” philipia said and turn to her heel.

Russia called out, “See you, sunshine.”

When philipia came down, she was carrying a variety of snacks from different country, though 50% were all from hers.

She went to the counter where new Zealand and her uncle are at, sorting and placing each things in a bag. Australia saw her and waved, “Heya mate. Lemme tell you, you're uncle is really something.”

Philipia asked, “What happened?”

Australia snickered, leaned close and whispered, “Your uncle ordered my bro around and my bro couldn't even say anything.”

Philipia: …

Australia laughed and told her about how Jack got angry when he got a lot of things wrong, how he berated and scolded him why new Zealand took mostly from his country rather than hers and made him run back and return them and start over again. New Zealand's face was black, yet he couldn't say anything because he was the one who offered to help first.

When they were leaving, philipia paused and turn to Australia who's leaning on the counter after jack forced him through grocery labor. She said, “Thank you New Zealand...”

New Zealand, who was just about to complain, halted. His frown slowly turned into a soft smile. “Hahaha! You're welcome philipia. It was nothing, I enjoyed helping your uncle.”

Australia raised a brow besides him but didn't say anything, though his reaction was obvious and new Zealand couldn't help but step on his feet below the counter.

Although philipia saw their small exchange, she still smiled and left.

When they got back, philipia offered to help jack arrange the groceries but was rejected and thrown out of the kitchen by her own uncle, insisting she take a warm bath.

Philipia, an obedient child, did as she was told and took a warm bath. She stretched out her arm and traced her injury that already healed and only a scar could be seen.

Maharlika asked, “Silly girl, are you really sure you want to kill martial?”

The question caught philipia off guard, but she calmed down and replied, “Why not?”

Maharlika paused and said, “It's just... You and martial have been together for many decades, depending on each other and building your country when it was nearly overtaken. Wouldn't it be too cruel?”

Philipia asked, “But if I let him be, what will happen?”

Maharlika respond, “innocent lives will be taken.”

Philipia said, “In exchange for a hundred and more lives, sacrificing one life isn't cruel.”

To save a million more, killing one is worth it. Even if it's someone close to you.

Maharlika sighed, “Then, did you really hate Greg?”

Philipia didn't even hesitate and said, “Very much. I hated him so much, both him and tito. I don't know what came over me but when I woke up, I just realized how I hated them both.”

Maharlika asked, “What about martial? Do you hate him?”

Philipia pursed her lips. She looked at her reflection on the water that almost reflected the hue blue locks of her hair. “I don't know... I don't hate him, but I'm not sure if I still love him.”

Everyday she grows confused and hesitant on the things she was once sure of. Everyday she asked herself what her feelings is. So much is happening, so much is going on that she can't keep up.

Stuck on a dilemma. Philipia remained quiet throughout the warm bath.

Suddenly, a thought popped up in her head.

After soaking, she changed to her pajamas and walked in the kitchen to see her uncle busy himself while stirring a pot of warm soup.

Philipia called, “Tito.”

Jack paused and glanced at philipia. He gave a smile and asked, “What's wrong niece? Already hungry? I'm almost done so be good and wait alright?”

Philipia walked over to him, “Tito. Remember what Italy said about lihim and papa?”

Jack was confused by the sudden question but he answered, “yeah. Why? Do you really believe your father would cheat on your mama?”

“mama cheated, so why can't papa?”

Her answer surprised Jack. He examined his niece's face that was obscured by the mask and couldn't tell if she was serious or not.

He coughed and avoided eye contact, “why do you think so?”

Philipia held her arm, “She slept with you didn't she?”

Her question wasn't a tone of uncertainty nor is it a pure question with nor real answer. It was as if, she was sure that it happened and she was simply waiting for a confirmation.

The hand stirring the pot stop. Jack didn't look at philipia, he didn't deny nor confirm. But he felt like philipia already knew the answer and was only asking for the sake of asking.

He then heard a sigh and Philipia's soft and innocent voice said, “Then it doesn't matter if papa liked someone else. Perhaps, I may not be papa's real daughter.”

Jack swiftly turn to her and exclaimed, “Don't ever think that you aren't his daughter!”

Philipia calmly stated, “Why not? Maybe you or someone else might be my real biological father.”

This statement rendered jack speechless. He never even thought of that possibility, nor even think those words would be said by his niece.

Jack turned the stove off and confessed, “You're right. I slept with her...” he paused and added, “more than once.”

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Chapter 33 : I promise I won't struggle and cooperate with you.

Jack sat on the sofa while philipia stood right in front of him. He scrutinized his niece and began telling the story of how and why he would ever do such a thing to his brother's wife.

“At first, it was an accident, the second time was on purpose and the third and fourth... anyways, we probably only did it six times...”

Philipia looked at him condescendingly. Jack couldn't help but swallow hard and admitted, “Okay fine. we did it every two months so it should be... 9 times.”

He quickly added, “But don't think badly of your mother. Perla wasn't that type of woman.”

“I always knew she was special even the first time I saw her. when I first did it with her, it was purely to help her... but also one of my selfish desire. Everytime I visit the house I would often use the kids as an excuse to just get a glimpse of her face and talk to her even for just a second or minute. But when I visited there one time, Perla was trembling on the floor. At that time, Kati was on the south region and would be gone for a good few months. He trusted me so he asked me to keep an eye out of martial, Greg and your mother.”

“But I broke his trust when I discovered perla. She was writhing in pain, crying all by herself. I asked her what was going on, she refused to answer and wouldn't even look at me in the eye. But I was too worried and scared that something must've happened so I plan to carry her to the village doctor but... when our eyes met, something in me just snapped. Of course I was able to get a hold of myself and held back but. Perla was begging, she wouldn't let go and...” her voice was like a siren that invites the sailor to their doom, pulling them down to the abyss of no return.

Jack couldn't say the last sentence and could only take a deep breath and avoided looking at his niece. He continued. “One thing led to another and we...”

Philipia continued for him, “You had sex.”

Jack flinched. He felt ashamed as though he was the worst scum and uncle in the whole world. He nodded and repeated after coughing awkwardly, “Yes. We had sex. When I woke up the next day, Perla was in my arms, both of us were naked. I apologized to her and even volunteered to tell Kati. But she stopped me and begged me to not tell anyone what happened. I couldn't say no, I've always been weak to her, and it was the first time she ever asked something from me. So I agreed and tried so hard to forget that night.”

“I asked her what happened the next day and she told me the story that, ever since last year, she began going into -what she called- estrus, or what you call heat. At first she was able to hold it back and Kati was there so she didn't think of it as a problem. But as the country grew, Kati began going on a trip every two to three months and would be away for almost a month or two. It was then she would keep it to herself, send Greg and martial to her parents place and bare it all by herself for a whole night.”

“she described the feeling of the unbearable pain and suffering. Her body was like on fire and she would often go to the river at midnight where it would be the coldest and soak there for 5 or more hours... She didn't had the heart to tell Kati. For some reason, she couldn't tell Kati.”

Philipia walked around the coffee table and sat on the single sofa chair on the right. “so she proposed for your cooperation?”

Jack looked at philipia with surprise in his eyes, “Yeah... she did.”

Philipia didn't react much and nonchalantly said, “Thought so.”

“How did you guess it?”

Philipia answered, “It's only practical she would ask for you. but

Tito, you thought you were the predator who took advantage of your prey. But in fact, you've always been the prey. Between you both, it would be you who'd lose more than her."

Jack was momentarily in a daze.

"You think Perla took advantage of my feelings?"

Philipia coldly stated, "If I was in her shoes, I'd do the same. Probably, for her, you were one of the disposable her 'eyes' added."

Jack looked at his niece whose words contain no fluctuation as though she was merely talking about the weather or something trivial.

"I'm disposable?" Jack's voice quivered. Recalling the times when Perla would knock on his door and greet him with a fervent kiss and do it all day till she's satisfied. He always thought he was someone special, at least, he has a small special place in her heart. But after hearing Philipia's words, someone who was similar to Perla and someone who's going through the same thing as Perla, it was like a bucket of cold water poured over his head.

He felt betrayed, hurt, and frustrated. But it's too late, his feelings for Perla was deep that seeped through his bone like a poison that he willingly drank.

"You said, if it was you, you'd do the same?" Jack asked, his hair covering half of his face, hiding his expression.

Philipia didn't think she said was wrong so she nodded.

Suddenly, her vision twisted and was pulled towards the large sofa with a body pressing her underneath. Philipia looked at her uncle hovering above her, locking her wrist above her head.

Hie expression still couldn't be seen.

"Then... if you were in heat right now, you don't mind me, your uncle, to do you?"

Philipia was calm while Maharlika was screaming and yelling in her

head.

Philipia replied, “No.”

Jack smiled and leaned down, his nose touching the tip of her nose. “Oh? Why not? Aren't I disposable? Didn't your beautiful yellow eye made me one of your emergency food? Your prey?”

Philipia still replied, “No.”

Jack chuckled, the kind of chuckle that was either angry, sad, or mocking. If he was angry, then he'd be angry at Perla, if he was sad, it'd be because his niece was too heartless, but if he was mocking, it'd be himself. He'd be mocking himself for being so foolish.

“Why not? If Perla could dispose of me, it means she can look for someone else right? You said so yourself you might not be Kati's daughter, and if it is true we are not blood related, I could do you if I want and I'm sure you won't struggle— because that's the kind of person you are philipia! That is why Spain could even make you pregnant, that's why, despite the danger, you'd throw yourself at the lions den and get eaten! You could've screamed! Yelled! Or maybe you could've ignored his invitation! But you didn't! You let yourself be eaten and look what has happened! This is all the consequences of your foolish action! It's too stupid...”

Plop... Plop...

Two drops of tear fell on Philipia's mask. It slid on the smooth surface and drop on the sofa. The strong hand trapping her wrist above her head trembled and even loosened it's hold. But philipia stayed still and didn't move.

Jack whimpered, bitting his lower lip to stop himself from crying. But to no avail, his pain and heart was just too hurt and disappointed that a few slipped and fell one by one. Each one of those tears fell on Philipia's mask, and each one of those tears were like his feelings—Escaping but was never caught.

Nobody caught it. No one will catch it.

“You got your answer... are you happy niece? I loved your mother, I

slept with her. But I, at least, deserve it right? I saw her first, I loved her first. I was patient and waited but someone else took her from me, and when I thought I could have her when that person left, I was still one step too late and she was once again, taken from me."

Philipia slowly pulled her hand and wrap it around Jack's neck. She pulled him down and pat his head, "I'm sorry... I brought up an old wound."

Jack's body trembled and fell on top of her. He buried his head on the crooked of her neck and quietly sobbed.

In that winter where the snow was noisy outside. The apartment was filled with the sound of a cry.

Philipia held her mask, wanting to remove it. "As compensation. You can do whatever you want with me, I look a lot like mama, then just think of me as her. I promise I won't struggle and cooperate with you."

Jack slightly paused. He slowly got up and looked at Philipia's face. Perhaps she's been wearing a mask all the time, he almost forgot how good looking she is. 90% of her face was very similar to Perla.

Just like philipia said, he can always do it. She herself promised she won't struggle.

Bathump. Bathump.

He had felt this. Other than the pain of being squeezed. He had felt this before.

Such temptation. She already presented herself on a silver platter, all he has to do is thoroughly enjoy and let himself drown in the sea of pleasure.

Perhaps the pleasure he felt with Perla would be even more better with the youth below him.

He wanted to see her mismatched eyes. His hand hovered around her mask— but as though his remaining conscious is still there. He

suddenly recalled a small girl who would run up to him, look up at him filled with trust and love, that he snapped back and got off the sofa.

He took three heavy breaths before he exhaled and said, “Perla is Perla... you're you. You may look the same, but to me, you're both different people. Philipia, even if we're not blood related, it doesn't matter. For me, you're family and my niece. I already made a lot of mistake in the past and I still owe you more than an apology, I won't repeat it again.”

After saying all of that, Jack turn to his heel, grab his coat and left the room.

Philipia slowly sat up, close the first button of her shirt and leaned her back on the sofa.

Maharlika screamed, “Silly girl! What is wrong with you?! Are you crazy?! What were you doing?! If it was someone else they would've done you already! Although there were signs of obvious desire in his eyes, he was still able to hold himself back, which you're lucky by the way! Why would you do something like that?!”

Philipia nonchalantly fixed her hair, got up from the couch and went to the kitchen to eat.

She said, “Tito needed a closure. Back at the underground with Italy, I realized a lot of things. Most of them are hard to explain but... one thing is for sure. Tito has to move on.”

Maharlika sighed, “If you were wrong? Then it means you broke your uncle's heart for nothing!”

Philipia's lips formed a smile. It looked soft and childlike, but her eyes were far from pure. “Impossible. One thing that I am sure is that, she never cared for tito. That's how cruel and heartless mama is unlike her kind facade.”

*

Jack looked up at the skyless sky, falling cold snow landed on his face, every huff and puff would produce a thin mist of smoke, his

rapidly beating heartbeat took a lot of time to settle down, as he recalled what just happened.

Fuck!

He's a scum. He's an idiot. He's the worst!

Why did he do that to hid own niece?! And he actually got a reaction! Fuck!

He really wanted to jump on a burning volcano and just die— or maybe rot in the 7 layers of hell!

Fuckkkk!!!!

“Lovely seeing you here, Professor Jack.”

Jack flinched and turn towards the owner of the voice. Asean stood not far from him, holding a brown paper bag with a brand on the front.

Jack took a deep breath of the snow. Although cold, it would at least allivate his shame. He greeted with a stiff smile, “Hello, professor Asean.”

Asean didn't notice Jack's peculiarity and resumed a friendly and neutral tone, “Why are you out here? you're only wearing a coat and no scarf and gloves on too.”

Jack once again recalled the scene earlier and couldn't help but shudder and cringe at his own action. “Errr... I felt stifled and wanted to get some fresh air.”

Suddenly, a strong cold gale passed through them causing Jack to shiver and sneeze.

Jack: …

Asean: …

It was obviously a lie but Asean replied, “Oh. Then I hope you won't freeze to death, haha.”

Although it was a harmless joke, Jack felt like he was being mocked (at least, that's what he thinks). He sighed and admitted, “Sorry, it's me and my niece. We had an argument.”

Asean didn't think he would tell the truth so he was surprised. He looked at the gloomy Jack standing in the cold with only a coat on and couldn't help but feel a bit of sympathy.

It reminded him of when he saw a flower alone on the side of the road on a rainy night. Tsk tsk.

He proposed, “How about you come to my room? I bought with me a couple of wine that is certainly perfect during winter.”

Jack saw the kind offer and nodded. Anyways, he's not ready to go back up and face philipia.

He's too ashamed.

_____

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Chapter 34 : I was comforting you.

Philipia opened her eyes from the sudden brightness and saw a small slit from the curtain that she wasn't able to fully close last night. She got up, brushed her teeth and prepared herself and went out.

When the elevator arrived on the first floor, she saw a couple entering the hotel and book a room from the front desk.

Last night, knowing her uncle would feel awkward, philipia decided to slip out of school late at night and book a room. Aren't she considerate?

And for how she was able to escape isn't really important.

Maharlika spoke, “If you weren't so stupid last night, you wouldn't have to walk for an hour and look for a hotel!”

Philipia pursed her lips and said, “It was just a prank.”

Maharlika: …

This girl is gonna be the death of him! No— wait, it's gonna be the death of the two of them! Tsk.

“Philipia?”

Philipia paused in her steps and turn at the man who called her.

Wearing a soft scarf and bonnet with an ice skating goggle on top.

Philipia couldn't recall when was the last time she spoke to Iceland. Was it after they were rescued or was it when Kyoto... Anyways, she didn't expect to run into him early in the morning.

Iceland scrutinized the youth, still wearing the mask then towards

the direction she just came from. He asked, “You slept in a hotel?”

Philipia nodded.

He raised a brow, “Why?”

Philipia replied, “You sleep outside the school and rented a condominium, why can't I sleep in a hotel?”

Iceland didn't pry anymore, “I was just asking.” he then walked to her side and they continued on the side walk.

“sorry I didn't contact you after... whatever has happened.” Philipia felt apologetic.

Iceland didn't mind, “No worries, I knew you were mourning and I wasn't that close to her.” he looked at her sideways and couldn't help but take off his scarf and wrap it around her neck.

Philipia was caught off guard, “Ugh. You're choking m-me.” she said, trying to loosen the scarf that would probably choke her to death.

Iceland rolled his eyes, “Why aren't you wearing a scarf. Winter here is different from the winter in the other countries.” he paused before carefully asking, “And... how are you?”

Philipia looked at Iceland and pursed her lips. Unbeknownst to Iceland, a thin layer of moist appeared on her mismatched eyes. But she replied with the same tone, “I've been well.”

Maharlika: no you're not.

Iceland thought the same but he didn't say it. He merely gave her a glance and resumed walking.

Iceland and philipia walked around the city, they would take a quick tour on one place after another and even visited a massive grave sight where a lot of people offered flowers, food, candles, etc... These were all offers to all of those who perished in the autumn massacre.

Iceland walked out and bought two candles with a blue and red ribbon wrapped around it. He gave one to philipia and they both walked up to light up their candle.

Philipia examined the various fruits, flowers and pictures of those victims. All of them had bright smiling faces. At the other side, philipia heard a loud wailing. She saw an old woman accompanied by two people behind her. She held a picture of a young man, hugging it while wiping her tear stained face.

Iceland gently lifted her and pulled her out of the place.

“Their deaths isn't our responsibility. We also lost comrades and classmates. Everyone is still mourning and everyone hasn't fully moved on. So don't feel guilty.” he said while his footsteps never falter.

Philipia responded with a soft tone, “I don't feel guilty.”

Iceland asked, “Then why are you crying?”

Philipia didn't reply. She remained quiet as her tears continued to fall.

“How did you know?”

Iceland brought the two of them in a park where there weren't a lot of people. He looked at the artificial lake and the small island at the middle. “Your tears are slipping out of the bottom of your mask.” he gave a short explanation.

Philipia gave an ‘oh’ and remained standing.

Iceland didn't offer any comfort or even a soft pat. He also remained standing by her side. Iceland wasn't tall, but he is still taller than the youth besides him. Her head could only reach about his chin, and when they stood side by side, their hands would sometimes touch.

Iceland looked at his feet a bit buried in the snow and to Philipia's that is definitely buried in the snow. A small arc made its way to his lips.

For some reason, he really wanted to hold her hand.

And Iceland did just that. He followed his instinct and slowly reached his pinky to her hand, as though his actions was hidden and a secret.

But philipia didn't move nor avoid him. When Iceland was able to hold her hand that compliments well with his, he gave a satisfied sigh and relaxed his body.

When looking from behind, one might think the two were lovers. Iceland simply closed off the distance between them and acted as though he didn't do anything.

Philipia sighed and turn to him, “Are you done?”

Iceland raised a brow and released her hand. “I was comforting you.”

Philipia: …

Iceland coughed and avoided her gaze, feigning ignorance as he said, “Anyways, are you done crying? If so, let's go somewhere and eat, I haven't had breakfast.”

Philipia checked the time on her phone and saw that it was already 8:45 am.

Philipia remembered that one time when she ‘helped’ Singapore by overcoming his fear of germs and thought of the diner she saw besides the cafe.

“I know a good place to eat.”

*

Jack returned to his room after drinking his fill with Asean. Who would've thought Asean was such a heavy drinker? More heavier than him?

He downed that wine with 80% alcohol like water, bottle after bottle.

Jack stood Infront of the door and took a deep breath, he wore the same stiff smile he gave to Asean last night and entered the room.

“Niece, have you had breakfast? Want me to cook...”

His words faded at the end when he saw the empty room. He went to the bedroom and it was empty, the wardrobe, cabinet, and even her necessities in the bathroom wasn't there.

Jack stood in the middle of the living room and couldn't help but slap himself. He's gonna have to change the couch and remodel the room.

“Niece? Philipia?”

He drop his coat on the table and dialed her phone.

“The number you're trying to call is unavailable right now, please try again later— dot.”

He furrowed his eyebrows and dialed her second number. Still unreachable. He then contacted Greg, which took 8 rings before he answered.

Greg's husky and just-woke-up voice, sounded. “Who the fuck calls in the morning?”

“Where's philipia?”

Greg paused for a second, “What? What about pearl?”

Jack sighed and said, “She's gone. She left the dorm.”

Greg was finally awoken, when it comes to his sister, he's always alert, it's almost effective to wake him up about his sister— it's more effective than his mother's yelling, “What?! What happened? Why is she gone?”

Jack can't explain to Greg about what happened so he gave a perfunctory explanation, “We argued...”

Greg, on the other side of the phone, raised a brow, “You argued?

Like, you yelled at each other?”

No, they didn't yell at each other. He simply pushed his niece down and wanted to do her because he was heartbroken when his first and last love betrayed him and used him—which was also admitted by his niece—which he didn't even stop to think how she knew and he simply believed her which was stupid—which he reacted strongly and... Did the thing that was mentioned above...

Greg noticed the long silence and felt doubtful, “You're not telling the truth are you?! Pearl wouldn't argue nor yell at someone. If she's angry, she would be very quiet and would give insults more painful than a stab wound! What the hell did you do?!”

Jack opened his mouth but didn't know what to say.

Say, he was minding his own business and was cooking soup when his niece suddenly asked him if he slept with their mom and one thing led to another he did that thing that was mentioned formerly?!

Wait, that's not right... He didn't do anything! He's innocent! He didn't touch philipia, if there's something he should be guilty about, it should be when he slept with their mom!

“Well...” he stuttered, before he gave a vague explanation of what happened (minus the part where he pushed her down and proposed to *beep* her).

Greg furrowed his eyebrows and still felt doubtful. But he replied, “Tch. You think that's a secret? You think a hyper kid like me would stay still and behave at Lola's house and not run back home and discover my uncle and mother fucking and having an affair?”

Jack: WTF?!

“S-so... you.... you knew.”

Greg rolled his eyes, “I knew, martial knew, and Lola knew.”

Oh heavens. Even martial knows. Was he judging him the whole time when he pretended to be such a good and perfect uncle? What

was martial thinking back then? What did Greg thought of then?

Then it dawned on him. When Greg questioned him if he was a virgin or not, he didn't seem surprise and was nonchalant about it.

To think his two nephews knew and even his niece, who was able to piece things together here and there without even seeing it herself, was also able to know. Jack felt like his IQ was crumbling while his shame was rising.

“H-how am I still alive?”

Everybody knew, at that time, Perla's father was a strict man that everyone feared. And if there's one thing he deemed important, it would be his wife and daughter, and he treated Perla the apple of his eyes and is very protective of her. If he knew, he wouldn't be alive today!

Even Kati wasn't spared from his vicious glare!

“Wait... you said your Lola also...”

Greg explained, “when I ran back and told her about it, she didn't seem that surprised. When I asked her why you guys were doing that while papa was away, she told me that it's best to keep it a secret and not tell anybody about it— including lolo. If mama doesn't talk, she wouldn't ask or force her to explain it. But now that I think about it, it's most likely because she went through the same thing since... well, you know, Armageddon's blood runs through her.”

Jack slumped on the seat and rub his face and massage his temple.

That explains it.

Jack then asked, “Then martial?” martial was also protective of Perla before philipia was born. He had a strong sense of justice as a kid so it would be impossible for him to remain silent for so long.

Greg shrugged, “Oh him? He just made a disgusted look. One that he would make when looking at a dead corpse or garbage”

Jack: …

Jack: “That's it?”

Greg: “That's it.”

Jack imagined the young martial make a scowl and disgusted expression and felt even more ashamed.

Greg then added, “Anyways, you have to look for pearl, I'll also look for her. Maybe she went out or something.”

“Uhh, Greg, there's something else you need to know.”

Greg, stop picking up his pants and leaned the phone on his ear again, “What?”

Jack felt guilty and didn't intend to hide it any longer, so he explained the full detail of what happened.

As expected, Greg was silent on the other side of the phone before he exclaimed, “WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU?!”

*

After eating breakfast. Philipia and Iceland wave goodbye and she walked back in the academy.

The guard at the gate was surprised to see philipia walking in when he didn't even remember her leaving. Philipia apologized and honestly told what she did and was asked to go to the student council office to get her punishment.

Philipia would never have imagined to be punished for violating school rules her whole life... Though she did more than escape once. But if the guard won't ask, she won't admit to it.

Maharlika frowned as he watch his silly girl learn to be shameless. Where was the cute and kind philipia?

Apparently she grew up now.

Like waking up from a lucid dream.

When philipia climbed up the stairs, she bumped into Canada who looked to be in a hurry. Seeing his syrup, his worried expression slowly loosened and beamed, “Maple syrup! I found you at last!”

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Chapter 35 : Her lips were sweeter than maple syrup.

Before philipia could comprehend what was happening, Canada already pulled her out of the school and into the forest that was filled with bald trees covered in thick snow.

After running for like 20 minutes. Philipia had no clue where he took her but it was still within school grounds.

Though, it was desolate and far.

Philipia asked, “Is there something you need? You know, you could've called me.”

Canada replied, “Well. Actually. I called you numerous times in different numbers, even the first number you have. They're all unreachable. I almost called the cops by the way— anyways I...”

Philipia said, “What is it?”

Canada swallowed hard and stuttered on his words, “T-The plan. I still think it's too risky...”

Philipia knew it was about ‘that’ plan. Just from the look of his face, she can already guessed it. “What is it that you don't like about it?”

“I don't like it at all. Syrup. Even if it means I'll get hurt or not, it doesn't matter!”

Philipia gave a stop sign which Canada immediately closed his mouth.

Philipia sighed, which caused Canada to be more nervous. “Do you even know what would happen? Many of us will die. You or someone else might die. I don't even know what his next action is, it could also be that tomorrow, maybe he's about to launch a war on

this country or not. Canada, I didn't ask you to help me not because I know you like me. I asked you to help me because this could be a possible world war three. Do you want that to happen?”

Canada exclaimed, “and by sacrificing yourself?! You said so yourself, this is about the whole world now. I don't know why your brother would want another war but I do know is that you don't have to sacrifice your freedom!”

Philipia said, “Canada! Did you even read the paper or even listen to my explanation? I am only a distraction so you can do your main job while I keep brother company.”

Canada was stubborn and shook his head fiercely, “No! I don't want that! I don't want that! You don't even know if your brother will believe you!”

Philipia sighed and turn to her heel, attempting to just walk away. Canada is too stressed and not in the right state of mind. Whatever she explain, he probably wouldn't understand.

But before she could even make 5 steps away, she was seize from behind and pushed against a tree. The impact was so great that a few snow fell and merged from the white snow on the ground. Obviously, the perpetrator was strong and didn't have any signs of being gentle and kind on his action.

But philipia didn't feel any killing intent and simply groaned in pain and looked at Canada whose eyes were a bit unfocused.

She called weakly, “Canada, wake up!”

Canada shook his head and mumbled the same sentence over and over, “Should've killed you... I really should've killed you, should've killed you... Should've killed you...”

“Canada!” Philipia called again.

Canada flinched and looked at her straight in the eyes, “Maple syrup, I can't bare to think what would happen to you... I don't want that! I don't want that! I don't want that!!!”

Then, he takes out a cutter from his pocket. Pushed the blade out and pressed it on her neck.

“Are you going to kill me?” philipia asked. Though her question was chilling, her tone had no fluctuation. She stated, “You know, I can handle you to myself without getting injured, and I can report you to the office and have you expelled...”

Canada pressed the blade even more.

Philipia continued, “The people in line will also be able to tell. Right now, they should've felt the pain earlier. In a few minutes, someone could be running around searching for me.”

Canada still remained unmoved. He looked at her straight in the eyes and still shook his head, “I don't want that... I don't wanna be separated from you.”

“Then let go damn it!”

Canada snapped back but still places the cutter near her neck. “Really should've killed you much earlier.”

Philipia sighed and gently pushed the hand holding the cutter. She didn't even use any strength when his hand leaned away and drop on his side lifelessly.

Soon after, there came the quiet sound of his tears falling, “I'm sorry... but I really wanted to kill you so badly so that you won't be taken from me...”

Philipia stared at the man who's a few inch taller than her, crying and wailing as though he was the victim. If he wasn't holding the cutter, someone might think she bullied him.

Hisss... Her back really hurts.

“I don't get it. Why would you want to kill the person you like? You like me don't you?” she wasn't being narcissistic but his actions were just so obvious that philipia can't remain clueless about it. Though, she really can't understand why.

Canada hiccuped, fat tears streaming from his face. His nose was red and his eyes were tear stained, looking so pitiful and weak.

The pitiful and weak Canada, replied, “I don't know. I just wanted to kill you so that only you can belong to me. So that the last thing you'll see would be me and that you'll forever be with me. But I can't bring myself to do it. I love philipia so much that I would grow restless! Even just by the plan you proposed is already making me so scared!”

Philipia sighed and hesitantly patted him on the head before Canada lunged towards her and wrap his body around her small frame. “Phililia I love you. I love you so much, can you feel it?”

It would be impossible for her not to feel it. She replied, “I do.”

“Then can you understand why I'm scared? If your beloved suddenly said something like sacrificing themselves, anyone would grow crazy from worry! Philipia. I just love you so much. I've never confessed directly before because I was scared and trying to be patient but I can't hold on anymore...” he whimpered and said in small voice, “I can't hold on...”

“Please philipia, change it! Change it please! I don't wanna lose you, I'd rather kill everybody than lose you! If you were to die, I'd rather you die by my hands!”

Philipia didn't know what to reply when the pitiful and weak (but holding a cutter) Canada would cry and say interment words continuously while warm tears covered his whole face and drench her shoulder.

She's almost about to have a headache and was almost about to agree but she had to hold back. After going through every possible way, this is the only one that would avoid anyone from dying— as long as martial doesn't do anything reckless. It was the best possible route.

“Philipia, please agree...” Canada pleaded, his hands wrapping even tighter around her that philipia felt like she's about to lose air.

“Canada, you know I c-can't!” she struggled to say.

Canada looked at her and frowned, “Philipia is really heartless! Here I am crying and begging you! You still won't agree?”

Who was the one who threatened her to kill her?!

Philipia sighed again. How many times had she sighed just this day?

“No matter what you do, I can't change it and I won't.”

Canada breaths out and leaned half of his body to her. Philipia was now trapped between the tree and Canada.

“Philipia, I love you.”

“hmm...”

“I love you so much.”

“I know, you said it already.”

“If you want to die, promise me you can only die by my hands, and I will only die by your hands.”

“... sure”

“Promise me!”

Philipia acquiesced, “Alright, alright. I promise.”

Canada sighed dejectedly as he leaned back and looked at the mask on the female leader. He looked at the two holes and attempted to take it off.

Philipia immediately stop his action, she warned, “I don't know if you knew, but looking at me directly can make you crazy.”

Canada looked at her with large beady eyes and smiled, “I am already crazy for maple syrup, going even more crazy is also better.” and he added, “And I also knew about it. The leaders who are in on the plan told me... so you don't have to worry.”

Philipia shook her head and pulled his hand away, “I can't take that chance. I don't want to hurt or... force anyone else.”

Canada pouted sadly. But as philipia thought he gave up, she felt Canada's naughty hand rubbing on her waist ambiguously and felt a little ticklish and uncomfortable, “You— your hand...”

Taking advantage of her focus on somewhere else, Canada quickly held her mask and pulled it off.

Philipia was shocked and couldn't help but angrily called his name, “canada!”

When her mask was taken off, she felt the cold wind blow her face and bangs away, revealing her bare face to Canada.

Philipia immediately shut her eyes and attempted to cover her face with her hands instead, but before she could do all those, Canada swiftly took a hold of her hand and gently pinch her chin to face him properly.

He pouted aggrievedly, “I don't get it. Malaysia said he felt like something was holding his head and pinching his brain, Greg said he felt like he was being choked to death. But I don't feel anything, in fact, maple syrup just got prettier and all.”

Philipia was dumbfounded and recalled when Japan reacted the same. He was normal and he wasn't in pain nor forced to speak incoherently like what happened to the others.

“Y-You're also okay?”

Canada caught the keyword and frowned, “Also? You mean someone else saw your face yet you're against me seeing it! Not fair maple syrup! Not fair!”

“w-wait I. It's not that, it's because... it's because...”

Canada soften his voice when he saw the rare confused expression on her face. He felt a slight sense of accomplishment and said, “I think I know why.”

Philipia perked up and asked, “What is it? Why is that you're not affected?”

Canada then cupped her face. He let go of the cutter and gently caress her cheeks. The warmth emanating from it felt like it was also warming his heart.

“Probably because I love you so much that it doesn't need to do anything else?”

Philipia flinched and seriously thought about it. And now that she thought about, it somehow felt like it made sense.

Canada grinned, “Do you want to know how and why I love you?”

He pinched her right cheek and said, “I've seen and had been in contact with a lot of beautiful people my whole life, but none of them can shake me. I've always been straightforward but most of the time, I'm too depress to even do anything. My only escape was drugs. I loved the feeling like I was flying as though my soul was leaving reality as I turn my fantasy like it was real. But because of your simple gesture, simple smile, simple laugh, simple words. It caused such a sensation in me that I knew, that I just had to love you and be mine all alone. But if I cage you and keep you to myself, I'm scared I might not see your smile— so I've been patient.”

“My maple syrup deserve to be appreciated, you deserve to be loved by everyone. But my jealousy would just grow day by day and my worry would increase. So it made crazy.”

He leaned close and inhaled the scent he loved, “When I love someone, although you are pretty, I never look at them for their physical appearance. I look at them through their soul. And when I look at you, it's not your eyes I see but your heart and soul maple syrup. It's beautiful.”

Thump. Thump.

Philipia felt her heart skip two beats. Her face slightly blushed and it was all exposes to Canada.

Feeling like the atmosphere was just right, Canada wanted to tease

his maple syrup by pretending to kiss her. But who would've thought, that when he leaned closer, philipia took the initiative to wrap her hands around his neck and cover his lips with hers.

It was warm and their breath intermingled.

Canada was at a loss for words for a second before he returned the kiss with enthusiasm. Sticking out his tongue, attempting to invade her mouth with no expectation to be greeted in return.

It was winter, the wind it blows was cold, although the sun was at it's zenith and it should be somewhere afternoon, the temperature didn't change. Though, the temperature between the two increased as their body heat would share with each other.

Philipia couldn't even hold back a soft moan, which only caused Canada to grow excited and kiss her more and more roughly, more heated, more fervent.

He felt a bit lightheaded— similar to when he smoke drugs. But the effect was much more... Effective.

“I love you” Canada said in between the heated kiss. The sound of their lips meeting echoed in the winter afternoon and around the empty and thick forest.

Nobody saw, nobody looked, as though they were the only ones left in the whole world. They were invisible and yet philipia even felt like they weren't on earth anymore.

“I love you so much...” Canada didn't stop to kiss, even slightly rubbing his body against her, hoping that the fire that she started could go down. He then took her hand and places it on his chest, Philipia felt his racing heartbeat; So she also took his hand and placed it on hers.

When they separated, a thin string of saliva still connects their lower lips. Both lips were red and swollen.

Both of their hearts were racing. Philipia's mind was blank, her face was flushed, her body was hot, and some unspeakable place was uncomfortable.

Canada smiled. Although he knew she was just swept from the mood that he made, he was still ecstatic. Kissing the person you love can be so sweet and delicious.

Ahhh. Her lips were sweeter than maple syrup.

“Philipia, again...”

Philipia blinked multiple times and looked up, only to be greeted by another round of kissing.

Then, she felt his hand slide down.

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Chapter 36

【 Hi~~ miss me? (□∀□) read the previous chapter to refreshen your memory (□▽□)】

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Before something could happen, philipia snapped and pulled Canada's hand that was just about to reach to a dangerous place. She pushed him away and took deep cold breaths as she calmed her beating heart.

Canada, who was suddenly pushed away, looked at his maple syrup with confusion.

Wasn't it going so well just now? What happened?

“Maple syrup?” he called.

Philipia looked up at Canada whose cheeks were flushed and eyes still retaining lingering desire.

This is wrong. Why should she be a slave for something she does not want?

Gritting her teeth, philipia picked up her fallen mask and ran away, leaving behind Canada, who was even more confuse.

As she was running, philipia bumped onto someone, tripping, losing her balance, and fell on the snow.

“Hiss... hey! Watch where you're going!” Atlantis held his shoulder that was just hit.

Fuck! Who would even run on such a snowy day on a slippery ground?! He looked towards the suspect and saw a petite youth with sky blue hair scattered messily over her shoulder.

He was surprise for a second before getting pissed. Damn, did he

just get hurt because of this small girl?!

“Hey! Are you deaf!? Why aren't you apologizing?! Tsk, bumping into someone and doesn't even apologize...”

Philipia couldn't hear what Atlantis was saying, her mind was blank and buzzing as though something inside it could snap at any moment. It felt like multiple people were ramming and screaming in her head, begging to go out, forcing their way out—It was so painful her nose started to bleed.

Atlantis soon notice the blood coming from her nose. He paused and stepped back. “Y-you...” He was the one who was unjustly bump into!

Finally, philipia lifted her head and showed a panic-stricken look. The words that Atlantis was about to say was immediately swallowed back. This was the first time he saw her face without the mask.

If he wasn't so pissed right now, he would definitely appreciate her face, but aside from being pissed, he's also struck from here eyes. Unlike what the others feel, he felt a suffocating air as though a rope extended from nowhere, wrapping around his neck, and choking him.

What the hell?

Philipia could hear all of her personalities screaming in agony, even the ever-so-calm maharlika was screaming. The voices in her head were like sounds from purgatory—it was simply hellish.

“Shut up....”

Snapping back, Atlantis soon realized his sweat soaking his back. He felt even more annoyed and even more pissed!

“You...! Look here you bitch, I was minding my own business when you suddenly came out of nowhere and bump into me! I would've left it as it is if you apologize, but I guess a leader like you isn't used to it...”

“No... shut up...”

Atlantis narrowed his eyes, “You...”

Philipia held her head and exclaimed, “Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!!!!!”

Atlantis was caught off guard. What the hell is she doing? Has she finally gone crazy?

“Maple Syrup!” Canada called from afar, after hearing his voice, philipia stiffened and immediately got up and ran away.

“The hell…?”

Atlantis was left there by himself, processing what just happened. When Canada arrived, he was panting and thick smoke was coming out with every breath.

Seeing Atlantis standing stupidly there by himself, Canada approached him.

Although he didn't like him, he was polite when asking, “Hey! did you see maple syrup?”

“Maple syrup?” who the hell would name someone maple syrup?

Canada huffed, “Philipia, duh! Who would I call maple syrup other than her?”

How the hell would he know?!

Atlantis sneered, “Why should I tell you? If you're looking for her, go find her yourself.” with that said, he clicked his tongue in annoyance and left.

Canada furrowed his eyebrows as he followed Atlantis' departing back.

If Atlantis looks back, he would witness the change of expression from Canada. The immature and childish face was replaced with a blank and terrifying look as though a storm was brewing inside

him.

If killing wasn't prohibited, he would've long been dead. Such a pity...

Canada narrowed his eyes before turning to his heel and followed the footsteps left in the snow. The size of the footprint was small so it obviously belonged to philipia.

Earlier, when they were kissing, he can definitely feel philipia's consent, but then she suddenly changed her mind.

He must find her and explain this misunderstanding, otherwise, he would remain a pervert and a sex maniac in his maple syrup's mind! That can't happen! Aaaaaaaaaa!!!!

But...

While running after the footprints, Canada placed his hand on his lips that still retained her warmth and touch. If philipia never changed her mind. They could've done it, he would've had her body, he would've branded himself to her skin.

Tsk... So annoying. If it was somewhere private, could his maple syrup still escape?

Philipia ran blindly and did not realize that she has left the school ground. Only when she stopped and found herself by the side of the road somewhere in the city that she realized she has finally gotten away.

Earlier, she bumped onto Atlantis and couldn't apologize. Her head was too painful.

Philipia gasped a few more and leaned her back on the concrete wall while people were passing by, giving her a short look.

The sound of voices and the sound of their scream finally cease. Closing her eyes, she wore her mask and hid her face before anyone could make eye contact with her.

But before she could properly put on her mask, she finally

remembered her bleeding nose. Philipia took a handkerchief from her pocket and carelessly wiped it off and wore the mask as if it was a trivial thing.

If the people in line felt it, though it would've been nice if they didn't, it's best if she could go back to her hotel and lay low.

Finally calm, she stood up and went back to the hotel.

China, stared at the tissue with blood in contemplation.

While he was doing his work as usual, he suddenly had a nosebleed. It only took him a few seconds to realize that something must've happened to philipia and tried to call her phone, unfortunately, it was out of reach.

“What happen?” North placed a medic kit on his desk and leaned on the edge, “Why did you suddenly had a nosebleed? It couldn't be because you were overworking, right?”

China stared at North for a moment before he shook his head, “No, it's probably because I didn't eat this morning.”

If it was someone else who knew China, they would definitely know he's lying. Him? Not eat? The world has to end first before that could happen.

Fortunately it's North who doesn't give a fuck about his well being —or to anyone at all— except, of course, to philipia.

Nevertheless, him reacting normally meant that he was the only one affected. The same must've been for the others, considering his phone was still miraculously silent despite the fact that something happened to philipia.

But why him? Why is it only him?

Before he could dwell on it, his nose, once again started bleeding.

Shit. Even his head felt like bursting. What is happening to your side philipia?!

In the hotel, philipia was on the floor, wheezing while clutching her head. The pain that was gone earlier was back again. In order not to scream, she bit on her lower lip hard that blood started oozing out.

At the same time, China also fell on the floor while North went to call for an ambulance. Even though he was screaming out in pain, his lips still had a cut.

The pain lasted till evening. China was sent to the hospital and philipia lay limp on the floor. Even though China could tell it came from her, he did not tell anyone. Knowing Philipia, she would definitely call for help if there is a problem. But his phone had been silent the whole time, thus, he can only keep it to himself and lie with a straight face.

After the pain subsided, philipia went to the bathroom. Looking at herself in the mirror with a haggard look, dark and puffy eyes, dry blood stain on her nose and lips, as well as a messy hair, Philipia couldn't help but look away.

So ugly.

She washed her face, changed her clothes, ate her dinner, and lay on her bed as if nothing happened, even the cut on her lips was now healed.

“Ili... ili...tulog anay...” She sang quietly with a hoarse voice.

“Wala diri...imong nanay...hic—”

Her nose felt sour and her eyes couldn't help but spill a few drops of tears, staining the white pillow with a gray patch.

Pulling her blanket, she buried her face on it and silently cried.

On the bed, a lump shape covered in blanket was trembling, a few escaping sound of sobbing could be heard in the dark and cold hotel room.

———————

【 Hope you liked it and see ya on the next one. Much love~ (˘

3ᓚ)】

Chapter 37

【 We meet again (□▽□) 】

———————

China furrowed his eyebrows as he stared at the dark screen of his phone. Every now and then, he would turn it on and off, hoping a new message might appear.

“Sup Chin—”

“If you don't want to die, shut up.” China rebuked.

“Sheesh, I was about to say ‘Sup China!’ but I guess you don't need it!” America complained, closing the door behind him.

“I really don't.” he replied without giving him a look.

What is this?! So angry!

America scoffed and grab an empty chair and sat down besides the bed, “So, what happened to you? I heard you suddenly had a seizure.”

China frowned, “I did not have a seizure.” who the hell told him he had a seizure?

As if reading his mind, America replied with a grin, “North told us, he said you suddenly started foaming in the mouth on the verge of death.”

China, “……”

“I did not foam in the mouth.” his lips was just cut.

America chuckled and leaned back, “Anyways, I'm here on behalf of everyone cause they don't really care and wanted to give you a fake support to get well soon.”

China, “……”

“Oh! And also, your work is piling up— North told me to tell you that.”

China, “……”

These garbage people... China mocked in his heart.

“I got your message so you can scram now.” China mercilessly kicked him away.

America pouted sadly, “Hey! I was even kind enough to visit you even though I'm such a busy person!”

China rolled his eyes, “I don't dare accept your ‘kindness’, especially if it's fake.”

“I am not fake! Look! I even bought you dinner! I went to stand in line to buy you this... Chinese soup vegetable thing...”

China looked at the plastic and the brand on it and recalled that a shop like that does exist. But it was exaggerated to say you need to stand in line when a leader is buying... In fact, you don't even need to stand in line, because people would automatically part a way for you.

Even so, he didn't say anything because it was tiring. “Sure, put it on the table.” he halfheartedly said and went to ignore him to look at his phone again.

America scoffed but place the dinner on the table, “by the way, have you seen philipia?”

After hearing the name, China stiffened for a second but immediately calmed down. “No, why?”

America didn't notice and scratch his head, “My brother Canada is looking for her. He said a misunderstanding occured between them and he wanted to talk to her.”

China raise a brow. A misunderstanding?

America continued, “I asked what the misunderstanding was and what kind of misunderstanding it could be for him to look so panic and scared. I mean, philipia is an understanding person, I'm sure if he explained well, none of this would've happened but... I guess it didn't go well?”

China thought for a moment. Could it have something to do with philipia and why she was in pain?

“I see... but I haven't seen her around. I've been busy with secretary duties in school.” God knows how much he wanted to burn all the papers and walk away.

America didn't doubt him and took his phone, “I tried contacting her but she hasn't replied. Even when I tried to call her, I couldn't go through— ah! I also heard professor Jack running around and asking for philipia as well.” he tilted his head in confusion, “Just what is happening? Why is everyone looking for her? Have they done something wrong or did I miss something?”

China rolled his eyes, “Just leave her be, Philipia is strong enough to protect herself, maybe she just doesn't want to be found and doesn't want to talk to anyone as of the moment— at least give her a break.”

America pursed his lips and said, “You're right. I just felt like these days... she felt so far, as if alienating herself from everyone. Even going as far as to wear a mask, trying to hide her face and expression.”

China couldn't argue with that statement. He too felt it, but he respect her decisions. If she doesn't want to talk to anyone, he won't take a step, he won't force her to speak, he won't force her to open up and tell him her feelings. Even if he's in line. He's still the same in her eyes. The same China whom she met once upon a time and the same China who one sidedly love her.

It's his fault for falling by himself and getting himself in this trouble. Philipia has nothing to do with it.

He sighed, adjusting the bed, he laid back down and face his back

at America. “If there's nothing else, go back. I'm gonna use this free time to rest.”

America raised a brow but still left, “get well soon then...” he felt something was wrong but couldn't tell what it was.

With a soft ‘click’ the door closed.

China looked back at the door, took his phone and dialed a number.

It only took one ring before it was answered. With his language, he ordered, “I want you to look for someone for me, but do it secretly. Messing around in Pangaea...” he paused before he corrected himself, “Messing around in Tethyria is like starling the snake.”

Philipia woke up groggily. She drank a few sip of water, washed her face and ordered breakfast from the hotel. When the food came, philipia opened the door for the attendant and closed it after they left. She sat on her chair and was about to take a bite when there came a knock.

It was unhurried and relaxed as though the person behind it has all the time in the world.

“Did they forgot something else?” she mumbled and thought of those attendants, but when she stood up, her soft eyes sharpen and took a step back towards the bedside table and opened the first drawer, and held the gun with a silencer behind her back.

“Who is it?” she asked. Her voice unwaver and calm—extremely calm.

But there was no answer.

Philipia didn't hesitate to aim the gun at the door and asked again, “I will ask one more time. Who is it?”

There came a soft sigh and a familiar voice, “It's me. Open up, philia.”

Philipia was surprised before she calmed down and hid the gun back inside the drawer before she opened the door.

Behind it stood a familiar face. His eyes were soft, his face looked exhausted and dreary as though he matured overnight.

“Tethys.” She called.

Tethys smiled, “Philia. How have you been?”

Philipia didn't reply but step aside to let him in. Tethys didn't hesitate and walked inside and studied the room his philia is staying. Surprisingly, the place was a mess.

Her bed wasn't made, a few dirty clothes were thrown into a mountain at the corner with a half open suitcase besides it with clothes peeking out, who knows which is clean and used. The bathroom door was open and a few necessities lay on the bathroom counter haphazardly.

It was refreshing to see a room where his philia stayed at that wasn't neat nor clean. Although he really didn't mind, but he still felt like the new philia was even more interesting.

He then saw at the center, a table and two chairs. On the table was a plate of breakfast set from the hotel and a cup of black coffee still emitting smoke.

He smiled, picked up the cup and took a sip.

“That's mine.” She said.

Tethys wasn't ashamed and even grinned mischievously, “Can't bare to share?”

Philipia already knew his character so she didn't argue anymore and sat back down to resume eating.

Tethys watched her pick up her spoon and ate her breakfast, completely ignoring his presence.

He gave her space and went to the messy bed where her heat still remain, even a slight scent of mint wafting from it—it could've been her shampoo or body soap, but it all felt new to him. Usually she would smell like spring and sampaguita. Now, smelling the new

scent of mint and citrus. It felt foreign but it was also his type of smell.

If he wasn't so sure this is his real philia, he would've doubted it was someone else pretending to be her.

“The bed isn't very good, it's not as soft as the bed provided by the academy.”

“As long as there's a bed, I can still sleep on it.” she replied without looking at him.

Tethys smiled but didn't say anything, his eyes continue to roam the room like a kid who is sightseeing a new house.

“There's too little things in this room. why didn't you ask for my help, I could've given you the best room in Tethyria.”

Philipia took a sip of coffee, “I don't need your help and I have money to provide myself.”

“I know sweetie, but I just wanted to let you know that I'm always free whenever it's you.”

Philipia nodded nonchalantly, almost spilling her coffee from the nickname 'sweetie' that came out of nowhere. “I'll keep it in mind.”

Tethys stood up, took off his coat and place it on the bed and went over towards the table and took a seat on the chair, “What happened? Why are you here instead of the academy?”

Philipia finished her breakfast and was now drinking her coffee, “I thought you would've known already.”

Tethys stared at those mismatched eyes, the diamonds hiding behind it finally showed itself. Even in this dimly lit room, it was clear and in contrast to the surrounding gloomy environment. He lifted his hand and tuck a strand of her hair behind her ear, “Who gave you this hair clip?”

The moment Tethys touched her ear, Philipia shuddered a bit. “J... before he left.” she replied.

“Hmmm. he told me he cut off his line with you.”

“He did.” she said and was about to take another sip when Tethys took the cup away and drank it, “That's good. I've always felt he was unworthy, considering what he did to you.”

“And you think you're worthy?”

Tethys smiled, “Of course. Who else is worthy for you other than me?”

“Your confidence no longer surprise me.”

“Philia, sweetie, you should've been used to it a long time ago.”

Philipia leaned back, crossed her legs and arms on her chest. “Oh? Like how you hanged me in the school rooftop along with the others?”

“Yes.”

“And how you made me your ‘slave’ for a week?”

“Naturally.” he took a sip.

Philipia sighed and thought that it was such a stupid scenario to happen. Was water clogging her brain before to follow his wishes?

Rubbing her temple, philipia sighed heavily. Heavily repenting on her past actions.

Tethys placed the empty cup on the table, “You've been sighing. Come, tell me what's wrong.”

“Nothing. I just want to be by myself.”

“Why can't you be with me?”

Philipia was caught off guard for a second, rendering her speechless. Why hadn't she realize how shameless and open Tethys was? It's giving her a mild heart attack.

Seeing her bare and surprise expression, Tethys felt his heart skip a

beat and couldn't help but soften his already soft eyes. The feeling behind it was overflowing that even philipia couldn't help but feel flustered and avoid eye-contact.

“So cute.” he mumbled openly, enough for her to hear.

Philipia felt her cheeks heat up and grumbled under her breath, “Who's cute...”

Tethys smiled even more. There was none of the usual mischievousness nor sultry look, but a genuine and pure expression as if he was a highschool boy who got to spend his time with his first love.

Tethys once again stroke the hair falling on her face, pulled a long strand towards him and gave it a kiss. “Your hair has gotten long, would you like to cut it?”

Philipia wanted to cut her hair, but thinking about her mother, she shook her head.

Tethys knew the reason why she grows her hair despite it being too long, so he understood.

Folding his sleeve, showing his arm that would make anyone glue their eyes on it, he stood up and walked towards the dresser that was empty with only a bottle of water on it. “Do you want help with it?”

Philipia unconsciously combed her hair with her hand. It easily passed through between her fingers like silks of waterfalls. Tethys' eyes couldn't help but watch it a couple more times.

“It's fine, I can fix it myself.”

Tethys chuckled softly, “Can't you at least give me face? I don't get to spend my time with you as much as I could like before. Just once, let me take care of your hair.”

Philipia watch him rummage through her bag before finding a hairbrush that was left fallen on the carpet floor. He beckons her over and took a chair for her to sit. Philipia has nothing else to do

anyways so she conceded and sat down.

Tethys first comb her hair with his hand. The hard and callous hand passed through the soft strands with great care. The hand that holds a pen that can order the whole continents is now holding a hair brush, serving someone else wholeheartedly.

First, he made a braid. He didn't make it too tight or too loose. It was just right and philipia couldn't help but ask, “have you done this before?” she looked at him through the mirror.

Tethys had a focused and serious look on his face but still replied with great patience, “I use to take care of my mother's hair and...” he paused and for a moment, a short glimpse of blurry memory came.

It was too blurry and too messy, but the feelings it brought was crystal clear. In that short but blurry memory, he was happy, content, and loved. He felt an overflowing love for someone in that memory, he felt happy with someone, he felt endless joy and peace, as if everything was right and perfect.

Sensing him stop. Philipia couldn't help but raise her head and look at the man through the mirror. His eyes were lost, as if reminiscencing a distant memory.

“Tethys?”

Tethys blinked a few times and stared at philipia's face.

“What's wrong?” philipia asked, “You were lost for a moment there.”

After snapping out of trance. That memory, as well as the feelings it brought, suddenly vanished. But the love he felt were still left behind.

For a second, he felt overwhelmed.

“Nothing... face the front.” He replied.

Philipia didn't urge him anymore and face the front.

Tethys was quiet the whole time and only the sound of hair combing was present in the quiet, dim room.

After about a while, he was done.

He stepped back a bit to see his work, “There. isn't it much better?”

Tethys made a crown braid with a few strands hanging loosely, making it look more casual and careless but still neat. Philipia looked at herself in the mirror and admired, “not bad. You can open up your own salon shop at this point.”

Tethys scoffed and crossed his arms, “The payment is tantamount to the salary they would get for their whole 200 years.”

Philipia couldn't help but laugh, “So my hairstyle is worth 200 years of salary?”

Tethys smiled, he step forward and caress her expose nape, “For you, it's free...”

There he goes again.

All of a sudden, Tethys bends down and leaned close to her, their nose touching. Philipia involuntarily inhaled a sharp breath and froze on her seat. Tethys looked into her eyes, unaffected by the hypnotic effect.

Cause why would he?

When he already loves her so much...

Overwhelmed, philipia's heart was beating really loud that even Tethys could hear it.

He leaned closer, the scent of mint was even stronger. Tethys was slightly intoxicated and couldn't help but rub her earlobes—which caught philipia by surprise and couldn't help but make a sound.

Realizing, her face flushed and stuttered. “I-I'm ticklish there! Don't get me wrong!”

Tethys couldn't help but laugh, his deep voice was husky and it made philipia shudder.

“I'm happy I can make you fluster like this. Philia—my philia, I'm willing to wait for you, no matter how long it takes.”

Philipia bit her lower lip, before she could even bite hard, a thumb came and separated her lips, “Don't bite your lips. You'll hurt yourself.”

Philipia nodded and pursed her lips instead.

Suddenly, there was a sound of a phone ringing. Tethys leaned away and answered the call.

Philipia immediately gave a breath of relief, but her beating heart was still fast. Recalling the moment when she was with Canada, she never felt like this. Although she was flustered, she wasn't nervous nor hesitant. It was only today that she…

“Sweetie.”

Philipia flinched, “Y-yeah?”

Tethys grinned mischievously, “Why are you nervous? I'm not gonna eat you.”

Philipia lowered her head in shame, “What is it?”

“I need to go now.” he said, kneeling down in one knee and place his head on her lap. The continent leader who was wary against everyone, now lays his head defenselessly with his back, neck, and every weakness of a human body, exposed.

But he didn't care. Even if she wants his life, he's willing to give it.

When did he fell this hard to the point morality and logic no longer matters?

Was it when she accepted his proposal to be with him, or was it when she almost died?

Either way, it doesn't matter.

Tethys hugged her waist and nuzzle his face against her stomach, causing philipia to avoid and contract it. He couldn't help but laugh, “Even you're ticklish here?”

Philipia didn't say anything but awkwardly patted his head. “If you're tired, rest.”

“Are you saying I should spend the night here?”

“Huh? What? N-no! No—I mean, you were the one who said my bed isn't soft and whatnot and that you have a special place that's ten times much better here. Why not go there and rest?”

Tethys couldn't help but hug her waist tighter for a second before standing up, “That special place that is ten times much better here is actually my room, and my room is located in my house.”

“Ohh... then go home and rest?”

Tethys clicked his tongue in a joking manner, “My dear philia. I can't just go home whenever I want. I'm now the new leader of the whole continents. Imagine the workload.” with that, he went to the bed, picked up his jacket and hang it on his right arm. “Anyways, I spend my time in the office more than at home.”

Philipia followed after Tethys who already opened the door with two bodyguards already waiting outside. “Sir, the car is now ready.” One of them said.

“Hmm.” he gave a vague reply then turned to philipia with a mischievous smile, “Well sweetie, I have to go now. I'll see you soon.”

Philipia was still not used to the sudden nickname but still said out of politeness, “Thanks for fixing my hair and taking your time to check on me.”

“It's what I should do.”

Rarely these days does philipia smile. But she smiled more than

once today with Tethys. If he knew they were somehow related, would he be sad?

Wait, why should she be worried? Isn't one blood related person, who romantically likes you, enough?

But if Tethys knew where she has been, is he already aware or does he really not care?

Anyways, it's not like they grew up together and were really closely related. She could've been a very distant cousin.

Wait... Why is she even looking for an excuse for him?

“Earth to philia~”

“Huh? Sorry, I didn't hear what you just sa……”

Her sentence was cut off when a soft and warm lips pressed against her right cheek. “I said, I'll miss you.”

Blinking a few times, philipia mechanically nodded and closed the door after they left as she process what just happened.

She was kissed! Aaaaaahh!

“You're in a good mood, sir.”

Tethys leaned on the back seat with a smile while watching the hotel, where philipia is staying at, getting further away.

“The sleepless nights this month seems to be all worth it.”

Tethys couldn't help curving his lips, “Right.... you're right.” He replied when another blurry memory came again.

The driver looked at him through the rearview mirror and saw his blank and vacant look. His master has been like this recently. Suddenly stopping in track or in the middle of a conversation, showing a vacant look in his eyes for a few second.

“Sir, would you like to go and have it check? It could be serious.”

Tethys shook his head and furrowed his eyebrows. The memory was still blurry but he felt angry, sad, and frustrated. It was the same frustration that he felt when he realize how weak he was against his father. He didn't like it, but aside from it, he felt more sad than frustrated. It was as if he lost someone very dear to him.

“No, leave it be. It's probably just a relapse.”

Relapse of what? The driver internally questioned but remained silent but gave a concise reply, “Of course, sir.”

Tethys leaned his head back and close his eyes, his mind full of the flustered expression of philipia.

Just a little more. He can have her. Just a bit more...

———————

【 <(￣□￣)> 】

Chapter 38

【 (□▽□) 】

Philipia stayed in that hotel for the whole winter break. Meanwhile, Jack and Greg, who have been looking for philipia like crazy, finally calmed down when they found out where she currently is by China.

“It's best if you leave her alone for the time being. I don't know what you did—and I don't care— but please give her some space. If she wants to talk to you, she will reach out on her own volition, but if she hasn't replied to your text messages or calls, behave yourself.” China warned.

Although Jack really did not want to listen to him, especially of it's his student, he could not help but thought how he was right. After the messed up shit he did, of course anyone would want to stay away.

Thus, Jack resumed his work in school like a dejected wolf that was abandoned by its owner.

Greg on the other hand was more understanding and took over the procedures of the his father's secret club, slowly moving everything without alarming Martial, to a faraway place—at least that's what Egypt said.

Greg opened the bottle cap and downed the whole water. “Damn it. This is making me nervous and tired and stress...”

Egypt, who was writing on a clipboard, replied, “You just carried a sack of pearls, why are you already tired?”

Greg furrowed his eyebrows, “I carried not only the sack of pearls but all the damn golds! I'm even starting to hate gold! Look at me!

I'm covered in golden dust!”

Egypt sighed tiredly and looked at him as if looking at an idiot. “Aren't you suppose to be happy? Anyone would die in your place just so they can touch gold or shower in golden dust.”

“it's itchy as fuck! It's even more itchy than my pubic hair!” He angrily said while scratching his arm and dusting his hair.

Egypt stopped writing and looked at him in disgust, “What in the pharaoh's name are you even talking about? How are your words so disgusting?!”

Greg raised a brow, “As if you don't scratch your balls.” he commented.

Egypt scoffed and with a prideful face, he stated, “I do not! And I shave down there! How about you? Who knows how many mites and lice is living in there for your balls to even itch! Eugh!” he turned to his heel and began inventorying to another spot.

“I also shave! Both down there and my armpits!” he yelled, his voice echoing in the empty underground.

Meanwhile, Nepal, who was cleaning in the meeting room with Italy, found an old rectangular wood, at the very dark corner besides the work table.

The rectangular wood was thin and it had a small rusted lock on the side. Nepal took a plier and gently removed the lock and realized it was a portrait that can be folded.

He took a disposable glove, and slowly opened it. Small dust and dead wood mites fell as he opened the portrait and used a soft brush to brush the excess waste away.

On it was a lifelike painting of a girl and a man. On the right side was a painting of a beautiful girl and the left was a painting of a handsome man.

The girl on the right looked like your typical girl next door. She had her hair tied into twin braids resting on her chest, her eyes were

upturned, her nose bridge was high, and her lips were small and cute with a little hint of sweet smile. For a moment, Nepal thought it was philipia, but the woman was much younger and a bit different.

On the left was a portrait of a man. He looked heroic, a chiseled face, cold and serious eyes with longer eyelashes, sword eyebrows, and lips formed into a half smile as though seducing as well as sneering at him. Even though it was just an old picture, Nepal felt intimidated.

Unfortunately, although lifelike, the painter used a gray, black and white palette so the portraits were like a black and white picture.

On the lower part of both paintings were their names: right-(Lakapati) left-(Dumakulem).

Nepal tilted his head and was about to call Italy when he appeared standing behind him, also looking at the two portraits.

“Was about to call you...” Nepal said.

Italy nodded and took the folding portrait from his hand. “This man looks like Greg.”

Greg, who just finished moving (arguing) upstairs with Egypt, came down and heard his name, “What's that? Are you backstabbing me?”

Italy scoffed, “I don't need to backstab you to kill you.”

Greg smirked, “Sure bud. If you can.”

Italy merely raised a brow from his intimidation and gave the folding portrait back to Nepal.

Greg watch Italy go back to doing his business and strode towards Nepal and took a look at the portraits. After a second, his eyes grew wide and exclaimed, “Fuck! Why does this woman look like Lola? And she's cute too.”

Nepal, “……”

Nepal placed the portrait on the table and started brushing the surface ever so gently.

“But she also doesn't seem like lola...”

“What is your grandma's name?” Nepal asked curiously.

Greg furrowed his eyebrows and tried to think.

“It couldn't be you forgot...” didn't he always brag to have a superb memory?

Greg flinched, “Nonsense! It's because I'm used to calling her Lola instead of her name! What about you? Do you know your grandma's full name?!”

“Of course, even my ancestors names.”

“……”

Greg clicked his tongue and rolled his eyes at him. “I'm not sure but I think Lola's name was....Wait… I think it's Hanan?” he looked at Nepal.

Nepal gave him a why-are-you-asking-me look.

Greg, as though he cracked a case, snap his finger and stated, “It's Hanan. Her name was Hanan.” he took the portrait again and looked at the man, “And this... looks a lot like me. Hey, compare it, do we look the same?” he place the portrait besides his face and did the same expression the man.

Nepal looked at the two back and forth and gave a small nod. He really looks like him. If his eyes were a bit more cold, maybe they would look like the same person.

“Lakapati and Dumakulem. Dang, such an old fashioned name.”

Italy was done packing and was about to move on to the next when Greg asked him, “Yo, if this thing is here, does this mean this belongs to lihim?”

Italy paused before turning towards him, “What do you mean?”

“I may be an idiot but I'm not stupid. I can connect some things from time to time.”

“Oh? And what did you connect?”

Greg placed the portrait back in the table, “I think Lihim is a relative from Mama's side and the things in here—as well as her willingness to help papa, already answers it. I'm sure pearl thought the same and this," he taps on the portrait on the table, “this folding portrait. I could understand if it was mama who would keep this old thing, but if it's papa, it's unlikely.”

Italy asked, “Why can't it be Kati? Perhaps because of your mother, seeing as how much he loved her, he probably wanted to do something for his wife.”

Greg shook his head, “Tsk tsk tsk. You don't know papa. What he cares is mama. What the fuck does her ancestors have to do with it?”

Italy furrowed his eyebrows, “How are you so sure they're your ancestors? Just because the man there looks like you? And that girl looks like your grandma?”

“Hmmmm, guess~”

Italy, “……”

“Hahahahaha! I'm kidding! Of course I know they're my ancestors.” he looked at the portrait again, “Because I've seen something similar in Lola's house. Though, they were both women.”

In his oldest memories, he recalled on one afternoon when he came home from playing, he went to his grandmother's house to ask for snacks. But when he got there, no one was home and as a rowdy and playful kid, he roamed around the hut and entered the rooms that were prohibited.

In one particular room. There was only a table with a candle, a charcoal, and papers. On the wall hung several pictures of men and

women.

Because he was still a small kid, he couldn't really see all of the portraits due to low lighting. Above the table hung a portrait of two women.

On the right was a girl with a scarf wrapped around her head, a few strands of black hair falling over her face. She had a soft look in her eyes, a soft smile, and serene face. She looked like someone with a kind and soft personality.

On the left was a girl with the opposite look. She looked cheerful, her eyes bent into a crescent, and a huge row of teeth showing that it influenced the young Greg to smile as well.

Through the portrait, he can tell she was a happy, cheerful, and energetic girl. Probably someone who was like him.

He walked closer and saw the names written below: right-(Mayari) left-(Tala).

“There you are my sweet grandson~”

A voice called behind him. Greg turned around and saw his Lola. She took off the yellow veil over her face and smiled. “Why are you so naughty? Why can't you stay still you naughty baby~ hehe~”

She tickled the young Greg which caused the boy to laugh and giggle. He instantly wrap his hands around her neck as she carried him outside. “Don't wonder around without supervision alright?”

“Nobody can hurt Greg! Greg is awesome! Greg is strong! Grrr. Lola look! I have muscles like papa!”

Hanan laughed and gave the young boy a kiss on his fat cheeks. “Yes, yes, our baby Greg is the strongest~ when baby Greg grows up, he must protect lola~”

“Dun worry Lola! I will protect you!”

“okay, okay~”

When they came out of the hut, a soft and melodic voice called out. “Hanan…”

Hanan stopped on her tracks, turned towards the owner of the voice, and smiled.

“Lihim. You're back~”

Greg snapped back from his memories and looked towards Italy with a shock face, which caused Italy to flinch and step back.

“Holy shit...” Greg mumbled.

“What? You were just talking about your grandma, why did you stop?”

Greg's jaw dropped that an egg can fit inside, “I met lihim...”

Italy furrowed his eyebrows, “What? How can you meet her?”

“I really did meet her! She and Lola knows each other! I told you! We could be distant relatives!”

Italy remained silent. In fact, he already had that answer in his heart, which is why he approached Philipia in the first place because of her connection to his fated pair.

Lihim never really talked about her past and is always hiding behind the veil, and can only find things by himself and -like Greg- can peace together information bit by bit.

“Lihim is our relative... she helped papa by giving him resources, stole precious minerals and other shits from different places to defend themselves before she left.”

Italy asked, “What did your grandma and Lihim talked about?”

“My memory may be good, but only if I think it's worthy to remember!”

“You almost forgot your grandmother's name you bastardo! What excuses are you saying?!”

Greg exclaimed, “shut up! I'm more of the brawns than the brains!”

Italy rolled his eyes, “Just hurry up and recall!”

Greg held both sides of his temple, trying to recall the contents of their conversation.

The young Greg was young and curious, hearing someone call his Grandma, he couldn't help but turn to look towards the stranger warily. Yet, what he saw was a person dressed in dark clothes wearing a black veil over their face.

“Hello, Gregorio Del Pilar, son of Kati and Perla, and the first born child.” Lihim greeted.

Greg was surprised from the formal way of greeting and couldn't reply at her immediately. He tighten his hold around Hanan's neck.

“My my~ usually he would be noisy and couldn't help to show off, why are you so quiet now?” Hana was amused.

Lihim chuckled, “He must be scared of me.”

Young Greg suddenly interrupts, “I am not! Greg isn't scared! You're the one who is scared!”

Hanan immediately scolds in a soft voice, “Greggy, don't be rude. Don't you know she's the one who helped your lola? Without her, your lola might be dead, and then your mama won't exist and then our brave little Greg also wouldn't exist.”

Lihim immediately said, “I did nothing of a sort. It's okay, I don't mind it, kids are like this you just have to be patient.”

“I know. I'm sorry Lihim, he's not usually like this.” Hana was apologetic.

Greg glared at Lihim for a moment before Lihim takes out something from her pocket and handed it over, “A gift.” she said.

Young Greg looked at the hand that reached out and unconsciously reach out his own hand and open his palm.

Lihim placed the gift on his palm.

It was a small carving of a karabao. It was very detailed and smooth as the miniature karabao would come to life any moment now. As a boy, the young Greg instantly became fond of it. “It's so cool! Lola, down down! I wanna show off against martial!”

“Ah! Greggy slow down! Don't kick!”

Suddenly, young Greg was carried by a soft and gentle hands, the scent of flowers and mint wafted to his nose, making him stiff and nervous. “Careful.” she said and puts him down.

“I'm sorry lihim.”

“It's okay.”

“Anyways, did you want to talk to me? Would you like to come inside? I can prepare an afternoon snack.”

“No, I won't stay long. I just wanted to let you know I won't be back in a while.”

“Again? But you've only just came back! Why are you leaving so soon?”

Lihim was quiet for a moment, “It is beyond my control. If I could, I would want to stay here for a little bit longer. I get tires too.”

“Is your job so difficult and secretive that you would slave yourself away like this?” Hanan was worried. She couldn't help but take a step closer.

“I have long given up struggling. now, I'm just going along the flow.”

Hanan's eyes glistened. The sun above them made her pair of vivid golden eyes shine. “Must you go so soon?”

Lihim nodded.

Hanan sighed dejectedly. Although she was sad, she could not be a

hindrance to Lihim. “Alright. But you have to take care of yourself, eat more and... stay healthy.”

“I will. Thanks, Hanan.”

Hanan gave a reluctant smile, “Where will you be next?”

Lihim was quiet for a moment, “I don't know.” She said, her right hand holding something and fiddling it quietly at her side. And as a small little kid, Greg noticed it immediately and tilted his head, curious as to what she was holding.

“I'll probably be somewhere really far away.”

“You always work far away.”

Lihim chuckled softly, “Because that is where the s... I mean, my feet takes me.”

Greg felt like there was something wrong with what she said. Don't you own your feet? Why does she speak like her feet owns her?

Hanan nodded and didn't realize the unnaturalness on what she said. “Alright. Come back soon, you're always welcome here.”

Lihim gave a short nod and was about to turn to her heel when she noticed young Greg is still here, listening to their whole conversation. “Why haven't you left? Are you not gonna show off with your brother?”

“Miss... lihim. Why is does your feet own you?”

Lihim was confused at first before she laughed. Even his grandma laughed behind him. Young Greg was embarrassed, but Lihim replied, “It is a figure of speech, you will understand when you are older.”

“Greg wants to be older now!” he declared.

Lihim seemed to have smiled behind the veil. She bends down and tap on his forehead, “Take your time little man. Only when you grow up will you regret being older. Being a kid doesn't seem too

bad, so don't rush.”

Greg held his forehead blinking his round, doe eyes, and nodded.

“I'm going... Take care Hanan send my regards to Perla and her husband.”

“I will.”

When Lihim was far away, Greg tilted his head and pointed towards the direction Lihim was going. “Lola, I think she's lost.”

“Why do you think so?” Hanan crouched down besides him.

“That part is where the cliff is. There's nothing there but sharp rocks and the ocean.”

“Who knows, maybe there's a secret there that only Lihim knows. In fact, she knows the terrain and our country more than us.”

The young Greg was in awe, “Really? She's amazing?”

Hana giggled and pinched his chubby cheeks, “Now, now. Let us stop talking about it, don't ever tell anyone about Lihim alright, she's our little secret. Got it?”

Young Greg nodded and hops happily, “Me and Lola's secret! Greg is good in keeping secrets!”

The both of them then walked away hand-to-hand.

Greg blinked multiple times and looked at the frowning Italy and deep-in-thought Nepal.

“I'm not too sure if my memory is 100% accurate. But I will say it's 70-80% correct.” he held his aching temple and paused briefly on his forehead. For some reason, that Lihim gave him a sense of familiarity.

“Do you still remember the cliff she went to?” Nepal asked.

Greg nodded. He took a sit and drank from the bottle, “I went there

once and was scolded by papa. It really is nothing but a high cliff, below it are sharp rocks and a strong ocean that could bitch slap your mom."

Nepal, "……"

Italy voiced out, "I do remember a place like that with my time in your country and I do remember Lihim disappearing from time to time like air."

Nepal tilted his head, "Is she a phantom? A ghost maybe or just a figment of your imaginations?"

Both Greg and Italy were silent, seriously contemplating if Lihim was real or not.

Greg inserted his hand in his pocket and fiddled with the karabao carving that was hanged as a keychain.

If it wasn't for Italy forcing him to recall that moment, he really wouldn't remember how he got this karabao keychain that's been with him for as long as he can remember.

Whenever someone would ask about it, the only thing he could recall was one day, he received this carving and showed it off against Martial, who was calm and collected, to suddenly grow jealous. It made him happy, thinking that he finally have something that Martial was finally envious of, which boasted his confidence to a 100.

Thus, up until he grew up, it has been with him.

Egypt just finished his job upstairs and went down to see two men at the side with a serious look on their face while Nepal was nonchalantly packing up at the corner.

Egypt felt like he missed 5 episodes in an hour.

"What happened to those two mongrels?" he asked.

Nepal, with the look of innocence on his face, answered, "They are contemplating the meaning of their life."

Egypt, “……”

Now it felt like he missed 20 episodes and a special episode.

———————

【 Dun! dun! Dunnnnnn!!!! (ﾉ゜0゜)ﾉ～ 】

Chapter 39 : Filipia

[image]

【 **Warning**: Massive spoiler ahead, please don't spoil on any social media if you have already read it, as well as on the comments section on old chapters from book 1 and 2. Thank you. 】

_____

Philipia was brushing her hair in front of the vanity mirror and thought about the kiss Tethys gave her.

Although it just on the cheek, it made her heart race really fast once again. Her hand holding the hair brush stop midair.

What is she even thinking?

Philipia sighed and looked at herself in the mirror.

Hideous.

Philipia puts down the brush and combed her hair backwards with her hand when she felt a sting on the side of her temple, then a voice she hasn't heard in a while.

[Silly girl]

"Maharlika?" due to surprise, she stood up. "Maharlika, where were you? You suddenly disappeared, I was so worried-and no matter how much I try, I can't seem to reach you."

[Of course you can't. We don't want you to].

"Huh?"

[They... For now, they don't want to come out and front. Although you were healing, it felt like something was preventing us. It's been like this ever since your baptism]

Philipia's eyes widen, "What do you mean?" she asked, "Does it have anything to do with my baptism?"

Maharlika was quiet for a moment, as though conversing with the others. [That... It's hard to explain...]

Philipia was suddenly scared and felt an ominous premonition, "What is it?" maharlika didn't reply, Philipia felt even more afraid. "Maharlika tell me! What is it?! What does my baptism have anything to do with you? What happened?!"

Maharlika sighed, [It made you immune to such mental condition. If you forcibly try to connect, one of us gets erased....] There was a slight pause, before he continued, [Red is gone]

Thump.

Her legs weakened and wobble on the floor. Her own protector was gone. If it was about the baptism, she did felt more stronger and more calm than ever. It may have been a good thing, but for her, it was both a blessing and a curse... again.

Unconsciously, her right hand reach for her right eye. The bright yellow iris, like the glowing sun, was throbbing.

Plop... plop...

Philipia looked down and saw drops of yellow liquid-like melted gold with crushed crystal.

"Red is gone...?" her voice trembled as she spoke. "How can he be gone? He's always there! He never leaves! He can't just leave! He can't be gone! Maharlika! He can't be gone!"

Maharlika, as one of her, can feel her pain and sadness. But all he could do was remain quiet and let the silly girl vent it all out.

Tears that are now made out of melted gold, as more of it drops on the floor, it immediately hardens and become real gold.

But perhaps it was the first time her eyes were used in such a way after it has just awoken, it came with a mix of blood.

[Before he disappeared, a new personality appeared. And he integrated with her]

Philipia heard what he said, "Who? Who did he integrated? Who is the new personality?"

Maharlika replied, [She's someone you're very familiar. She is also a protector but she's a vulnerable protector with no shield to defend herself].

"Who?"

[She seemed to have been with Red all this time, hiding behind his door. You don't have 15 people inside you silly girl. You had 16]

In Philipia's mind where her personalities reside. Their their is a long corridor that stretch from afar and doors on both sides. Each door occupy a personality, whenever some of them fronts, their door opens.

Red's door was a tattered door. Behind it is nothing but a vast plain on red grass. The sky was gray and red, the clouds were red, even the sun is red. At the center of the plain was an altar, the altar had 99 steps. When you get to the top, there is a circular platform with a scarificial table in the middle. It was stained with dry blood that stains the floor and all the way down the 99 steps. Whenever Red is sleeping, he sleeps on that table.

Who is this 16th person? How come she doesn't know? If she was hiding behind Red's door, where would she hide in that empty plain?

Maharlika knew what she was thinking, [I went to Red's door. I also thought the same, but if you go a little farther, not far from Red's altar, there is a cross. On it, She is hanged and nailed there].

When Maharlika saw the cross, he was also surprised to see it for the first time. Despite both being a protector, their theme were both of sacrifice type. The new personality was wearing a white dress stained in blood to the point you can't see the original color white. Her wrist were both tied to the cross and her palm were nail, as

well as her ankles and feet. She was nailed there exactly the same as Jesus, but instead of a thorn crown, she wore a sampaguita crown.

Maharlika said, [You both share a memory, so neither of you were aware of each other].

"Not aware...?"

He continued, [She calls herself Filipia. A protector. She's the innocent you who knew nothing. The one who bore all the humiliation, the pain, the confusion. The one who is loyal and obedient in front of her brother, the one who forgives easily, the one who knew nothing about what's right or wrong, the one who doesn't seem to realize the limit and boundary, the one who allowed Maria Clara -your suicidal personality- to come out, the one who allowed herself to fall prey to Spain's trap, the one who carried and lost her child, the one who everyone loved, the one your brother moulded, manipulated, and controlled to his desire. Both of you were existing at the same time, but she was on the dominant side and more in control].

[You were scared, you were afraid to open up, you didn't want to be close to anyone. You were a quiet child from the very beginning-but it was filipia, the one you made, the one who was created with me from the very beginning, escaped from your shell and showed the world what they wanted to see].

Filipia was her first protector, but an alter can also produce their own personality. As a protector that can't protect herself, Red was born. He was the opposite of her; he was strong, he was brave, he can fight back, he can protect her whenever she is in danger.

Philipia's heart kept beating like crazy.

Thinking about it now, it always felt weird. She clearly knew she wasn't naive, she wasn't gullible, nor oblivious. But during those times, it felt like her mind were the total opposite. She knew what it meant but her mind tells her she doesn't, instead of saying-'I knew that's her mouth instead says 'I don't know, I've never heard of that.'

Filipia was the ideal '*Philipia*' everybody wanted. Because '*Philipia*' wasn't a sweet, innocent, and forgiving person. She was an antisocial, introverted, and insecure girl.

Because they share a memory, neither of them were aware of each other. They just thought they were both a contradicting personality she has.

[You probably don't remember it anymore. When you were just a little girl, you were normal like everyone else. But one day, you wanted to save an animal, but that animal ended up getting abused along with you and that was when your heart began to close itself].

"Abused?" She mumbled.

That's right.... when she was little, she saw a group of kids kicking and abusing a cat. The cat was dirty, thin, and obviously on the verge of dying. When she mustered up the courage to confront them, despite being a leader, despite being a royal. They didn't care, they hated her, despise her, and threw rocks at her.

They said harsh words that a normal little girl couldn't handle. When she came home, she carried the dying cat in her arms filled with cuts and bruises.

The next day, she continued on like always... But now it seems.

"That was when Filipia came out... That was when she took over without knowing what she really is... and I-" Philipia sobbed and hugged herself, "I'm no one."

She's not sunshine, she's not maple syrup, she's not phia, she's not mahal..... all of those belonged to Filipia.

It must've been when she woke up after cutting herself that the real *Philipia* came back to front.

[Filipia was at her limit. For more than a hundred years, the rest of the personalities were created through the both of you, but mostly-from her].

All this time, she was just a coward-A coward who was hiding

behind a facade. A coward who involved an innocent person to bare the pain for her.

[That is why... Only when a certain trigger happens can Red come out. Because they were created as one. A weak protector also needs a protector. That is why...]

"That is why Red...integrated with her, because I'm now at the front." because he's no longer needed.

[You were the dominant personality from the start. Her job was to protect you in her own ways. So don't feel bad nor apologize, because apologizing is like an insult to her efforts].

[That is why... ... Don't always depend on us, silly girl. It's time to let go].

...

Jack was typing on his laptop when he heard a knock on his door. He stop his work and answered, "Yes, who is it?"

"....."

Nobody replied. Jack tilted his head in confusion and was about to twist the doorknob when his phone began ringing. He hesitated for a moment before answering the call.

"Hello?"

"...Very good."

It was only two words, but it sent a shiver on Jack's back, instantly soaking it with cold sweat.

"Martial..." he swallowed hard as he answered. Beads of sweat starts to roll down from his forehead.

"I wonder. How long you can hold your breath uncle-*beep*."

Jack didn't even think twice to roll on the side towards the bathroom when someone inserted a small and thin tube of spray

underneath the door.

"Shit!" he cursed.

Quickly, he opened the balcony window attempting to climb down the balcony below him. But before he could start, somebody shot a small dart to his right arm. He was tricked! And he fell for that cheap trick!

Who else taught him that other than him?! Fuck! Did he lifted a stone just to drop it on his own foot?! Why did he had to teach such things to a young man! Look what happened!

Jack removed the dart on his arm and wobbled on his feet. Leaning on the balcony, he tried to keep himself from falling off to his death and stepped back multiple steps before falling limp on the floor.

Before his vision turned dark, he saw the door open and a pair of polished shoes walked towards him. "Tsk... tsk... tsk... you've been idle for too long uncle. Being a professor really doesn't suit you."

"Martial... This is someone else's... territory." he managed to say with great difficulty.

Martial laughed, "And so? Do I look like I care? Sleep well uncle, you're gonna need it for what comes next."

It's a good thing he left the important files to Greg but unfortunately, he still couldn't talk to his niece.

He really wanted to apologize.

[The number you've dialed is unavailable right now, please try your call later-beep]

Greg frowned as he stared at the number shown on his phone. He was standing outside, smoking, before calling the number once more.

"What the hell, I thought we were meeting today? This trash uncle-" he clicked his tongue and put his phone back in his pocket and took a long puff of his cigarette.

Exhaling a thick smoke alongside the smoke from the cold, it wasn't long when Greg was envelope by it and took a long time to dissipate. "Argh! Damn it! Why am I even smoking when it's still winter! Damn it!" he swatted the smoke around him.

"You seem to be in trouble."

Greg scoffed, "Yeah, it's so fucking annoyin-" he stiffened and slowly turn towards the owner of the voice.

Not far from him, Martial, wearing a coat, and black leather gloves, stood. He was standing there with a straight back and relax smile.

"Long time no see, brother." he greeted casually.

Meanwhile, Greg was screaming internally and began chanting a Buddhist mantra China taught him a long time ago.

Swallowing his nervousness, he greeted with a stiff smile, "H-hey broooo...." damn! If it wasn't for the secret club, he wouldn't be this guilty and nervous about hiding a secret that could potentially be used by a war lord!

Martial smiled meaningfully, "You still look ugly and haggard like shit."

"....."

This bastard!

Because of that direct insult, he somehow calmed down. For once, he's thankful for Martial's sharp venomous tongue.

"Ha-Ha, thanks." he sarcastically replied.

Martial walked towards him, causing Greg to have a semi-heart attack. "You have more?" he asked, which caught Greg off guard.

"Damn, since when did you smoke?"

Martial skillfully lighted the cigarette and exhaled, "Since once upon a time. You wouldn't know anyways."

"..." Greg said nothing and resumed smoking. "You... Why are you here?"

Martial exhaled and replied, "Meeting, Tethys called for all leaders."

"Ah... seems like he's getting busier and busier."

"Indeed."

There was a moment of silence between them before Martial spoke, "By the way, why have you been sneaking in my territory along with the others?"

Bathump.

He chuckled as though he finds it amusing, "you're like rats scurrying around, looking for food, unaware that the owner has been watching the whole time."

Shit, they're screwed. He already knew from the beginning.

But what did he expect?

It would've been weird if he didn't, after all the commotion they made by moving those heavy ass tanks through a boat.

"Can't I go home with my friends in my home?"

Martial sneered. He finished his cigarette first before dropping it on the snow and stepping on it. "Home? Since when did a Tethyrian soldier became one of my people?"

Greg replied, "Wasn't this what you wanted you bastard! Didn't you wanted to be the sole person to inherit the land? Didn't you want to rule Philippines? Now that I've left, why are you constantly making me feel guilty for something beyond my control?"

Beyond his control were the invaders you colonized them.

Martial gave him a smile that didn't reach his ears that it gave Greg goosebumps. He said, "Why should I make you feel guilty when you never belonged in my country? Besides-Why should I? Who are

you? A soldier of Tethyria, to speak to me, a leader, in this manner?"

"I am also a leader-"

"A soldier, Greg." he corrected, "A soldier. And once again, let me remind you, you're not worth my words for me to make you feel guilty."

Greg was nailed in place as though a basin of cold water was poured on him. His words were almost identical to what pearl said.

The moment he left, the moment he never came back despite his freedom to do so, he never deserves to go back anymore.

Martial fixed his cuff and collar before turning to his heel, "Oh, and make sure to clean that dirty underground. It has always bothered me and would often forget to clean it up."

Ah... He knew. Before pearl found out, before they found out, from the very beginning, he knew.

All this time he could've used it, he could've started his revenge early on. But no, Martial decided to make the perfect and most elaborate revenge ever.

"You don't have to worry about me interfering, those old tin can garbages aren't worth my time and effort. Oh and those golds and whatnot, keep some for yourself, you might need it someday." after saying all of that, he left.

But if Greg listened carefully, he could hear the vague sign of threat and warning.

After Martial disappeared, Greg took a step forward and fell to his knees. When was the last time he felt this weak, this afraid, this frustrated? Even though he has always been good in terms of combat.

But if he fought against pearl, he would surely lose. And if it was on logic and the use of brains, he would surely lose to Martial.

Perhaps it's because he never experienced what they went through that he's falling behind. Pearl and Martial walked on the road full of blood and thorns-and what about him?

While his country was in dire need of help, he was somewhere else, drunk, after a single victory in battle.

Only when you went through so much pain and blood that you can be mature and strong enough against anyone.

"Damn it... I have to tell pearl." He forced himself to stand up and walked towards the direction of the hotel Philipia is staying at.

【 All this time. The Philipia you knew was actually Filipia?! w(° o °)w 】

Filipia: Protector.

First protector. Born alongside with Maharlika (internal caretaker). She shares a memory with Philipia, the dominant personality. She is sweet, gullible, innocent, naive, oblivious, and foolish. She is the definition of a saint, the holy Mary that forgives all sins. She started to protect Philipia when she was still a little girl after she was bullied by a group of kids. She is the epitome of "If I don't want to understand, I can't understand".

She likes to be neat, clean, and cook. She loves sampaguita flowers and is fond of growing them herself. She likes playing with piano and guitar, likes to read and study, likes to make poems and take notes, she loves spending time in the library and really likes the sound of rain.

She loves the color blue and green. She loves sweet and dislikes bitter things. She trust someone easily and loves to help others if they are in need of help.

*Filipia was the ideal **Philipia** everybody wanted. The true Mary sue of this book.*

Chapter 40

【 (ᵕ ᵕ) 】

Greg, Egypt, Nepal, and Italy sat in the living room with solemn expressions. After Greg called them, they all agreed to meet at his house and discuss their next plan.

“How the hell did he know?” Italy questioned.

Greg looked haggard and stressed. He rub his face and comb his hair backwards. “You don't need to know. If Martial wants to find out, he can find out. If he wants to know, he can know—but what terrifies me is that he already knew from the very beginning yet… he didn't do anything. It was as if everything was according to his plan.”

He was just waiting for the rats to approach their own demise.

“Maybe he just found out and is bluffing?” Egypt tried to ease the situation.

Greg looked at him and said, “He doesn't like to bluff. Even if I haven't been with him for a long time, I still know him more than anyone else.”

“Then what should we do? We moved everything from the underground, including those heavy tanks, shouldn't we tell the others it's fine now and proceed to the next?” Italy suggested.

“No!” Greg exclaimed, “Now that we know martial knows, the more reason we shouldn't continue the plan. Let's switch to plan B.”

“Wait, there's a plan B?” Egypt whispered to Nepal besides him.

“Plan B? Are you crazy Greg?! Didn't we all agree we can only do

that if something has gone wrong?!" Italy exclaimed.

Greg gritted his teeth, "Exactly! Now that something has gone wrong—i.e martial knowing the underground club— the more reason we should switch to plan B!"

Egypt mumbled under his breath, "What the hell is plan B?"

Nepal, who was quiet, leaned close to his ear and explained what 'Plan B' was.

Egypt listened carefully and raised a brow, "Switching to plan B is feasible."

Italy snapped his head towards him, "No! We haven't even discussed this with Philipia!"

"Pearl needs her time alone! She's been through so much right now, give her a break!" Greg scolded.

But Italy thinks otherwise. "Screw her time alone! the second world war is about to start, the world cannot wait for her!"

His words just fell when the door was knocked. Greg was startled and couldn't help but held his fast beating heart and curse, "Fucking hell, that scared the shit out of me."

"Who is it?" Nepal asked as he stood up from his seat and went to the door.

"M-me..." a raspy and tired voice answered.

The four men looked at each other. Greg gave a nod and Nepal slowly opened the door.

Slump—

"Professor Jack?" Egypt called out.

Jack had fallen on the ground, beaten and battered. His face was full of bruises and his body was trembling visibly. Nepal hurriedly kneeled down to help him up but Jack grab his shoulder for support

and announced with a serious tone, “we're running out of time. Plan B. Let's switch to plan B.”

5 hours earlier.

Jack woke up and found himself strapped to a metal chair on both wrist and ankles. He struggled for a moment when his head throbbed painfully as though a sharp flat line was playing in his head.

“How was your nap?”

Jack almost jumped from his seat when he heard that familiar voice. He looked towards the source and saw Martial casually sitting on a chair and drinking coffee while reading a book.

His hands wore a black leather gloves, giving a slight sound of rubber rubbing together whenever he flips the pages.

“This is Tethyria... doing something like this here, aren't you afraid of what comes after our country, Martial?”

Martial didn't look at him. He unhurriedly closed the book. “It is true. In terms of money and military... our country is inferior against the others... But is it something to be afraid of?”

Martial placed the book on the table and faced Jack with a calm and relaxed look.

Jack's expression turned bewildered and surprised. He couldn't believe what he was witnessing at the moment.

A pair of mismatched eyes were glowing as though diamonds and crystals were in it— the same eyes as Philipia.

“You think I didn't know?” Martial asked.

Standing up, he buttoned his coat and fixed his gloves, “Even way before you, Greg, and Philipia found out about our connection with Armageddon, I already knew about it from the very beginning.”

That is why he never baptized Philipia, that is why he forbid it. He

knew the pain that comes afterwards, the consequence she must face, and the effects of the eyes.

But he also expected her to disobey his words and would still insist on getting herself a baptism.

Who made her so stubborn to disobey her brother?

Jack wanted to ask but Martial was faster.

“Why?” he asked but answered it himself, “Because I tend to think a lot, I use my head a lot, and it is also because I can't forget anything. All of the things me and Philipia went through is still as vivid as crystal water in my memory, then how about Lola and her connections? You think I wouldn't know?”

Jack trembled on his seat as he looks up at his nephew who already grew up. For the first time, he finds himself weak and helpless in front of him.

Martial looks at him condescendingly. “And even if Tethys knew what I was doing—what can he do about it?” he nonchalantly said.

“If I want, I can just take over this forsaken continent if I want to.”

Suddenly, the pressure in the room cooled down. Jack, as a leader, even had a hard time breathing. It felt like the oxygen wasn't enough and that he could die at any moment.

Meanwhile, Martial stood unhinged and appeared to be unaffected. Yet his eyes kept glowing, like a predator eyeing it's prey.

It could've been a beautiful sight, a good looking man with mismatched eyes that seems to contain a billion stars, yet he gave the opposite feeling as though hell and the abyss was looking at you.

When the air pressure returned to normal, Jack gasped heavily—wheezing, greedily breathing in air.

“Just kidding~” Martial playfully smiled, “It isn't time yet. But— I do have some business with you, oh dear uncle Magdalo. It is about

your experience and past. If you don't mind, can you tell me your story?”

His voice just fell when multiple men came in, two of them wore lab coats, one was holding a tray and the other pushing a stroller with medical equipments.

Martial took the syringe, flicked the needle and faced Jack. “I have always been worried and curious about what you've gone through and as your former student and your caring nephew, I can spare some time to listen to it.” he chuckled like a devil, “All of it...”

Jack struggled hard and even released his marks. But to no avail, Martial also released his marks that was ten times stronger than his and was easily subdued by Martial's men before he pierced the needle on his neck.

“Struggling is futile, dear uncle. This is inferiority.” he leaned close to his ear and whispered, “and it is being born on the weak side of the family.”

...

When the story ended, everyone in the living room wore an even more serious and solemn expression. The atmosphere was gloomy and dark.

Greg, sitting on his seat, trembled in fear. He looked at his shaking left hand and held it with his shaking right hand. “So he knew and have already mastered the skills it (eyes) brought.”

Greg looked at himself through the reflection of the water in the glass on the coffee table. His eyes were dark brown and black. Although he's related to Armageddon, he didn't inherit her eyes. He doesn't know if it's a blessing or not.

Jack was being treated by Nepal and Egypt as he spoke, “I don't know what else he can do and how powerful Armageddon really was, but it did not feel good. When the pressure suddenly dropped, it felt like I was being thrown in outer space. Usually, when someone is lacking air, they wouldn't be able to think straight, but

at that moment, my mind was clear as normal as if I wasn't really begging for air." it was as if Martial can control every part of his body.

Italy sighed, "Is that why Tethys is afraid?"

"Afraid?" Egypt frowned, "how can he be afraid? Isn't he the most powerful leader right now? Isn't he also related to Armageddon? He also has yellow eyes."

Italy looked at Egypt like a fool. Nepal replied instead, "We haven't seen him use his power as Armageddon's descendant."

"So? Maybe he just doesn't like to use his power and abuse it."

Nepal shook his head, "That isn't what he (Italy) meant."

"What do you mean mongrel Nepal?" Egypt was even more confuse.

Jack answered, "It means. That Tethys might not possibly be related..."

There was deathly silence.

Greg was the first to snap out of it, "Not related? you're saying we've been serving someone fake?"

"It is just a conjecture! Greg, sit down and listen!"

"No! If he isn't real then what was the meaning of my service? Who was I protecting? Who was I serving and swore to protect and serve?!" Greg's voice grew agitated as he thought that his whole life and military service had been a lie.

"I am not entirely sure! It is just a conjecture! Perhaps what Egypt said was right, maybe Tethys is simply hiding his power and doesn't have the thought of using it to control his people."

But Greg was fully convinced that the leader he's serving is a fake. The thought of him leaving his family and never coming back to serve an unrelated leader made him hurt his soul. It felt like he was being played like a fool.

“Those motherfuckers!” he exclaimed and stormed out of the living room.

Italy hurriedly chased. “Where the hell are you going?!”

“Where the hell am I going?! You're asking me Italy?! Of course it's to kill those sons of bitches!”

“You think you can?! Gregorio! although you're a leader and you may think they're fakes, but you can't defeat them just by yourself!”

“I don't care! I don't give a fuck! I don't give a shit! I left my family for them, to serve them! I protected this continent for more than a hundred years! Yet this is what I get?!”

Italy yelled, “What are you looking at?! Help me!” he looked at Nepal and Egypt and they all hurriedly went to stop Greg.

The house was in chaos, Greg was too agitated and unstable that his eyes turned red, tears kept streaming down his face.

Jack, on the other hand, just felt exhausted. He couldn't remember what he said to Martial and what else he revealed to him, but he knew he was done for. The secrets he kept, his thoughts, everything was exposed.

When he woke up, he found himself still strapped on the chair, his throat dry and parched as if he had been talking for hours and hours. Whilst Martial, still had the same relaxed and casual appearance as he resumed reading his book and drank his coffee.

He felt like a joke, a clown. He didn't feel comfortable yet he was helpless against him.

“I had fun, uncle.” he said without giving him a glance. “Your life story was very interesting. I look forward to seeing you again.” with a wave of his hand, two men came in and took him away.

He never got to say anything else before he was knocked unconscious and woke up in an alley while snow had accumulated on him.

With a battered and tired body, he forced himself to stand and walk towards Greg's place and bring them a bad news.

“Mongrel Greg! If you go now it will all be over! Plan B, C, D, E, F, G! Or whatever alphabets are there left! It will all be over!” Egypt exclaimed while hugging Greg's waist and pulling him, Italy was pushing him back whilst Nepal was blocking the door with both hands and legs.

“Think about it you asshole! Think clearly!” Italy yelled.

But no matter what they say, no matter how they convince him, Greg appeared to be filled with rage and no words can reach his ears.

It was at this moment that jack stood up, took the fireplace poker, raised it above his head and slammed it on the back of Greg's head, hitting him to unconsciousness.

Italy, “……”

Egypt, “……”

Nepal, “……”

“When someone doesn't listen, beat them up.” he gasped, as if hitting Greg was all the strength he had left. He threw the poker away, walked back in the living room and sat on the sofa.

“Call philipia and everyone else. We need to have a serious discussion.”

【 ᘐ□ . □ᘐ 】
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Chapter 41

Philipia stared at the huge banner hanged at the entrance of the Academy that read: **Congratulations to batch 867 for graduating in Pangaea Academy. May you prosper and serve the continents!!**

Russia and Kazakhstan's graduation was coming up in two weeks. When winter ended in Tethyria, snow started to melt, flowers started to bloom, and a new batch of students/leaders attending.

Philipia finally felt nervous. For the first time, she does not feel confident. Knowing that it was Filipia who had been giving her support and has been behind her all this time, she felt insecure and scared.

After that conversation with Maharlika, he suddenly went quiet. None of her alters spoke and none of them were reachable.

Due to nervousness, She repeatedly fixed her mask in place and would cower and shrink her head between her shoulders whenever someone comes close to her or even walk past her. Earlier, someone greeted her, she felt nervous and stuttered on her words.

Without Filipia, she had a severe social anxiety. She would start to shake and sweat really bad when conversing. The total opposite of the cheerful and social butterfly Filipia.

“Philipia!” someone called.

Philipia flinched and tried to look for some place to hide but it was too late, the person... Or people. Caught up to her and stuck close besides her.

Indonesia and Malaysia both smiled, “Are you here to get your new uniform too?” Malaysia asked.

“An email was sent to us and told us about the new design. After

Tethys took over -although he hasn't changed the name of the academy- he did change a lot of things, starting with the uniform and the two academies.” Indonesia added.

Malaysian nodded, “I saw the design and I was so thrilled! Our spring, summer, autumn, and Winter uniforms looked so cool! Oh! Of course, I'm also happy that the female and male academy are now merging, now Philipia isn't the only female! Isn't that nice?”

They both looked at her and she felt overwhelmed by their energy. How come she never realized that the way they spoke looked like they were running a marathon. She felt tired and exhausted, and she was just listening.

When Philipia didn't reply, Malaysia and Indonesia didn't think it was weird. It was thanks to the mask that hid her nervous expression that they didn't think much of it.

“By the way...” Indonesia whispered, “I heard about what happened to china.”

Malaysia also turned gossipy, “Philipia, did you hear? China was sent to the hospital not long ago because he started convulsing and foaming in the mouth.” (China: For your information, I wasn't foaming in the mouth!)

China? What happened to him? Could it be because of what happened to her? But why is it him?

Indonesia added, “North also said that he first started bleeding in the nose, then he started screaming in pain. A lot of students passing by also heard his screaming and they said it was so agonizing that they felt their hairs standing.” he started rubbing his arms and hands, “Just by hearing the story, my hairs are already standing!”

Philipia was still in a trance before she tried to calm down. She asked nervously, “Wh-where is he now?”

Malaysia blinked, “He's at the office of the student council. Working. Doing paper works.”

Philipia, “……” I thought you said he was in pain? Why is the patient working?

“Anyways, enough about that! Let's go and get our uniforms!”

On the way, they met several other leaders. They all appeared to have a good winter break and greeted her with the nicknames they gave her (Filipia).

‘I'm not her... I'm not her... I'm not her...’

She chanted in her head.

But amidst the laughter and social interactions, if one would look closely, philipia was almost shrinking in the corner of the group, clutching the hem of her shirt, sweating beads on her forehead, and trembling.

When everyone arrived at the students office, they found a lot of students lining up. If it wasn't for the students office being a large and spacious area, it wouldn't have been able to accommodate all of the students.

Seeing a group of leaders entering, they all respectfully saluted and bowed. While some female students squealed and waved at them with flushed cheeks.

Now that the school has merged, you can see the increase of crowds and wondering students in the vicinity. Now, philipia wasn't as conspicuous anymore as the only female student.

“So noisy.” Estonia grumbled under his breath. Finland scoffed and led him to stand besides philipia.

Estonia immediately beamed, “Sweetheart, don't you think these people are too noisy?”

Finland, who had a stoic and serious expression, softened as he looked at Philipia.

Although they felt philipia has changed a bit, she would still reply to them and talk to them from time to time. But this time, philipia

remained quiet. Her mask covering her expression as if the things in this world cannot disturb her—but in fact, it does.

She felt dizzy, clouded, nervous, and scared. There was too much people and too crowded. Her breath began to accelerate as more sweat stained her back.

Arabia, who noticed what was happening behind them, found that philipia was not in the right state of mind. He went towards them and asked in a low voice, “what's wrong? Do you feel uncomfortable?”

Finland also found out something was wrong, “Sunflower?”

‘I'm not her... I'm not her...’

She's not sunflower, stop calling her that!

“Sweetheart?”

She's not! She's not! She's philipia! Call her real name! It's philipia!

Soon, the others began to notice. They all turn to her and unintentionally became the center of their attention.

“lotus?”

“Philip?”

“ladybug.”

“Philis.”

“Amor.”

“Philips.”

“Goddess.”

“Angel.”

Their voices calling out one after another with all these different names seems to mock her identity, looking down at the real her,

seeing through someone else from her.

Philipia suddenly bends down and was being held by Arabia who was closest to her. “Philipia! What's wrong?!”

Singapore also felt uncomfortable seeing the crowd, but after the continuous exposure brought to him by his dormmates. He was able to hold himself together.

But seeing Philipia and her reaction. He couldn't help but feel worried, but mostly, he felt confused. She was the one who helped him the most to overcome his fear. But now, seeing her like this and her familiar actions, he couldn't help but ask. “Why is she hyperventilating?”

His question suddenly awoken the group of leaders and they all became worried.

Hyperventilating?!

Philipia doesn't look like she's hyperventilating, she was bending down and was held by Arabia by her waist to keep her from falling, but she was quiet. A person hyperventilating would be breathing rapidly, noisily, and heavily.

“Take off her mask!” Even if he knew the danger, Brunei still said it.

Arabia hurriedly took off her mask and saw her gagging and gasping without a sound. Her eyes were vacant while psychological tears were streaming down.

“Quickly, take her to the clinic!”

There was a sudden commotion and some students couldn't help but feel curious, murmuring in low voices.

“A female leader suddenly fainted.”

“What is happening?”

“Is she okay?”

“Isn't that miss Philipia?”

“Was she the only female leader here?” a female student asked.

A male student replied, “She's famous for being pretty and smart in school. Everybody likes her, but these these days, she suddenly became low-key and wore a mask.”

“what happened?”

“Nobody knows except the leaders. Their world is different from us normal citizens afterall. Even the cities and states cannot interfere much.”

“I see. I hope she's okay. It's not everyday we get to see a female leader. They are rare afterall.”

In the clinic. The nurse and doctor checked the unconscious Philipia. Because they were too many, only two people were allowed to come in.

“How is she?” Brunei asked.

“She is okay, she just needs a lot of water and something to calm her down.” the doctor replied.

“What happened? She suddenly started hyperventilating, she was never like this. It's as if she has a fear of crowds.” Singapore asked.

The doctor checked his clipboard and wrote something on it, “The crowd is actually one of the things that caused her like this. It is a normal response to people with social anxiety disorder. She was overwhelmed by the sight of a dense group of people.”

Social anxiety disorder?

Fear of crowds?

The words the doctor spoke shocked the two.

Brunei had known Philipia, he knows that she never had a problem with people and even interacts with strangers normally with a

cheerful face. But why now? Why is she suddenly so.... Introverted?

A thought came in mind, “Could it be, because of her alters? Is it an alter of hers?” Brunei whispered.

Singapore has heard of her multiple personalities. “Could be. But we can't just assume baselessly, let's wait for her to wake up and ask her instead.”

Brunei glanced towards the unconscious Philipia. Her face was pale, her lips were cracked and dry, her eyebrows were furrowing as though having a hard time sleeping.

“We haven't seen her a lot these couple of weeks, but Philipia has changed too much.”

Singapore frowned, “You sound like you don't like her change.”

Brunei flinched, but regained his composure. He replied, “Of course I am. What if one day, the Philip I know suddenly disappear?”

His words were accurate. The Filipia he grew up with and got to know, had long since retreated in the background. Although she didn't disappear, she has no plans to appear anymore.

She simply wanted to rest, because her job is done.

Singapore didn't seem to expect the other to give him such a reply. He was silent for a moment before speaking again, “I think she's fine. Whether it's an alter or not, for me, she's still the same person who helped me overcome my fears.” he raised his hands and held his lips, recalling the scene of him pressing his lips against her soft ones.

He looked towards Philipia and saw her chapped lips. He went to the nurse and asked for a basin of cold water and a clean cloth before coming back and wetting her lips to moisturize it.

When Singapore finished, he sighed and sat down, “I'll call the others and tell them the news.” he can slightly hear the noisy discussion outside the clinic. It isn't good to disturb such a quiet environment.

Brunei nodded, “I'll go out too.”

Just as they both left and told the rest of the people outside. Philipia, whose eyes were closed, slowly open.

The glimmering and crystal eyes were now dark and lifeless. Like a flower that wilted, a color that turned gray, a luster that became dull. It was as if, the bright star has fallen and died.

“Oh, you're awake. greetings leader, I am the nurse of this academy, your friends had just left would you like me to call them back?”

Philipia looked at the nurse who had a professional and distant smile that clearly stipulates the boundary of their status.

She licked her wet and moist lips before she shook her head, “No... don't call them.” I don't want to see them.

...

“What happened?” China asked.

He was working in the office when Singapore called him about what happened. Earlier, he did feel his heart racing and his head getting dizzier, but it wasn't anything painful and thought that it was just the after effects of the medicine.

Who would've thought it was linked to Philipia again?

But this time, the link was more weak. Like a connection going bad due to bad signal.

Afterwards, Nepal called him from Greg's house.

When he arrive, he saw the leaders who were in the plan, gathered around the living room.

Jack was sitting on a single sofa with bandages wrapped around his head and on his cheeks, arms, and neck.

“Sit down first.” Egypt suggested.

China frowned and insisted, “I asked you what happened to Philipia. Where is she?”

“She's at the clinic.” Nepal replied.

As China was about to turn to his heel and go to her, he was stopped by Jack's voice saying, “Martial found out.”

China flinched and stop. His back still facing them.

Jack continued, “He found out about us and the underground.”

China, “……”

“How did he find it anyways? Didn't Philipia had to like, find those papers and coordinates in order to find that place? How come when she was looking for it, it was untouched?” Greece asked while stroking Athena's feathers.

China turn towards them. “Why are you still questioning whether he knows something that's hidden in his own country or not?”

Greece looked at him and realized, “Oh...”

Egypt looked at them back and forth, a little confused. “What is it? What? What? How did Martial found out?”

Nepal leaned close and whispered the reason.

Martial is the leader.

His country recognize him.

His marks can spread and connect to his land.

Egypt still had question marks on top of his head. “huh?”

Everyone rolled their eyes at him. Nepal held his forehead. It's hard to believe Egypt is actually a leader.

Germany, who pushed his glasses, explained, “leaders marks can locate things i their own land. So perhaps, when Martial was looking for resources or minerals, he found the underground.”

“It is how a leader hunt in his own land. everybody does that.” China added.

Everyone looked at the clueless Egypt, who nonchalantly replied, “Oh. I'm not short on minerals. Plus, my people are good at digging through tunnels and sand so they can find it themselves. No wonder I didn't know—cause I never do that.”

Everyone, “……”

Almost forgot he's a treasure-maniac.

Jack sighed, saying, “Alright, that's that. He knows and now we're screwed.”

“Why bother making it family friendly? Why can't you just say we're fucked and we're super fucked.” Israel appraised.

Poland frowned, “Watch your mouth Israel. It's so vulgar.”

Israel gave a shrug, “But I'm telling the truth aren't I? Were totally fucked.”

The room was enveloped in silence.

“China, what do you have?” Jack spoke.

China rub his forehead, “I did investigate but I'm still not sure.”

All of a sudden, Greg came down from the upstairs and asked, “Are they fake?”

Everyone turn towards him.

Italy and Egypt immediately stood up, for fear that Greg would storm out once more. But Greg was calm, he asked again, “Are they fake?”

The ‘they’ he was asking was obvious.

China stared at Greg for a moment before he takes out a folder and handed it to him. “See for yourself.”

Greg took the folder, opened it, and began to read.

For a moment, the only sound that can be heard were the sound of Jack stirring his coffee and Greg's unhurried flipping of paper.

“Bastards...” He mumbled. He closed the folder and threw it on the coffee table before going back upstairs.

Greece looked at him and took it, “High possibility of unrelated blood ties with Armageddon...”

It was then when China began to explain Project honeycomb.

He explained that there may be a high possibility that Gondwanda and Laurasia were artificially made. But when it came to Tethys, he wasn't sure.

“It was suspiciously easy to find out about those two crazy sisters, but when it came to Tethys, it was as though I was looking for a needle in a haystack.” He said.

Germany voiced out, “But there is also a possibility of him being the same...”

“But was made differently.” Greece added.

Egypt took the folder and also began to read. While the others were discussing their opinion and brainstorming what to do. Someone's phone rang.

“Come on Barbie let's go party~ aye aye ayeee~ come on Barbie let's go part—” the song was cut off and Egypt answered, “Hello? Pharaoh speaking.”

“.....”

Nepal tried to sit far away from Egypt, hiding his face while the rest were looking at him in confusion.

Israel was the first to react, “A Barbie song is your ringtone?”

Egypt raised a brow with a look of ‘so what?’ he asked, “So what?”

“……”

Egypt scoffed and rolled his eyes at him. “Hello, who is this?” he asked again.

All eyes were on Egypt so they saw his expression alternate from surprise to serious. “Anuket?”

Everyone perked up. Egypt hurriedly turned the call into speaker, “Anuket, is that you?”

[Yes……]

Poland immediately jumps in to say, “I miss you Philis! Get well soon!”

[……]

[Thanks…]

“Anuket, did you finally read my message?”

Jack looked at him, “You told her?”

“Why can't Anuket know? I was simply giving her an update, whether she reads it or not, reply to me or not, is up to her.”

Jack sighed, “But still, she needed time for herself and not...”

[It's fine…] philipia cuts him off.

Jack swallowed back the words to continue. He still felt bad about what happened and a bit awkward now that he's talking to her again.

China, who was the most calm and rational person in the room, asked “What do you think? Now that Martial knew, what do you think we should do?”

On the other side. Philipia was on the bathroom floor. Blood was everywhere, staining the white tiles. A knife lay not far from her. But her body did not have any wounds, yet she herself knew how

many times she has stabbed herself over and over again.

She opened her blood stained lips, “I know.”

In the living room, they all glanced at each other, “What do you mean you know?” Israel asked.

[I mean, I knew Brother Martial knew... About the underground club.]

It really wasn't that hard to find out. Now that she thought about it, Filipia sort of overreacted when she found out about Papa's secret club.

If it were her, she'd probably just read the letter and that's it. She would run out, cry, and feel so depressed about it. Even with Italy's taunting, she wouldn't feel much.

Philipia sometimes thinks she's contradicting. She's introverted, doesn't speak much, quiet, slightly autistic, insecure, and socially anxious. But she's also calm and observant at the same time.

Why is she so hard to understand than Filipia?

At the other side of her phone, Italy stood up, “So you knew! Why didn't you say anything?! Did you know your uncle was beaten black and blue by him, did you know Greg is unstable right now?!”

Nevertheless, the reason why philipia even bothered to read the message and take the initiative to call was to test something out, and she finally got the answer she needed.

None of them felt her pain. No one was in line for her. Not even China.

At first, she thought perhaps China was the only one who can feel her pain, perhaps China was the only person who was in line with her.

But now the answer proves that he wasn't hers, when he felt it, Filipia was still there with her...

No one was for her... Nobody is.

“Professor Jack has nothing to do with me, him getting beaten black and blue by brother is already the greatest mercy brother could give. Gregorio on the other hand has long left our country, why do I care about him?”

Everyone was rendered speechless.

The sweet, forgiving, and kind philipia uttered the words, *“Why do I care?”*

Israel's voice trembled, “Angel, you...”

[It's philipia, country leader Israel] She corrected. [The angel you know is no longer here.]

At first, they thought she was speaking metaphorically. “Philis, what do you mean?” Poland's eyes were still in disbelief. This type of Philipia struck him as unfamiliar.

Philipia picked up the knife and stabbed her stomach without a change of expression. Blood gushed out, staining her dress and the tiled floor, creating a puddle of red blood.

“Can you feel it?” she asked.

At their side, everyone was still confuse on what was happening. When philipia spoke with a calm and almost monotonous voice, [You don't, do you?]

It was a statement that they can't seem to understand.

China frowned. He felt a slight tingling sensation on his stomach and abdomen but it quickly went away.

The connection was getting further and further until it snaps and disconnected.

And it unknowingly happened without anyone noticing anything strange.

[It does not matter whether professor Jack was beaten, Gregorio in denial. None of it matters to me. Because all of those matters to someone else—but not me. On behalf of her, we'll continue on the first plan. If one of you objects, I won't force you and you can leave as you like. But if you agree, just leave it as it is for now and I'll contact you if there's anything to change or an update.]

[Are there any more questions?]

Her voice was calm, talking as if she's simply in a meeting in an orderly and concise manner. There was no room for objection or change and there was no time to add a second opinion. It gave them the feeling of a president who was indifferent and cold-blooded.

Italy's veins bulge on his forehead that signified his anger is rising, “Philipia! What nonsense are you spouting now?! This is a serious matter now that Martial is aware! How can we still continue the first plan?!”

[Italy, you're really annoying you know that?]

Italy gritted his teeth, “What the fuck did you say? Say it again, in my face.”

[I said. You're noisy, obnoxious, and annoying. You pledge to protect her and follow her orders from now on yet you can't even follow simple orders.]

“Quit speaking in third person and speak like a normal person!”

[Let me repeat myself. We'll go with the first plan.] She added, [and I'm not speaking in third person, and even if I was, what do you care?]

“Philipia!”

Jack stood up mediated the situation, “Stop it! Philipia already gave her orders, if she wanted us to continue on the first plan, we'll do it —don't make things worse than it already is.”

“Are you really going to listen to her?! You know the dangers Jack! Are you really going to remain like a fool?! Because what? You feel

guilty you almost fucked your niece?!”

“Whatttt?” Egypt was appalled by the revelation. “Who's niece did he wanted to fuck?”

Israel frowned, “What the hell is going on?”

Jack snaps back at them, “Nothing!”

Damn it! This guy and his lousy mouth! He regrets telling him about what happened!

China, who remained quiet at the corner, leaning against the wall, ignored Italy's complaints and banter. His hands were under his chin and in thought when he spoke, “Alright, we'll do the first plan.”

Jack breath a sigh of relief when the subject was changed, “That's right, plan A, we'll do it.” he quickly jumps in.

Egypt was still in shock, his mouth wide open an egg could fit inside while Israel's attention was successfully diverted.

“Angel...” he called but was once again cut off by philipia.

[My name isn't angel, Israel]

Israel corrected, “P-philipia...” he uttered the name, it felt foreign and weird.

[What is it?]

“Do you have a plan?” he asked.

Philipia was now laying on the floor among her blood that had already cooled down and congealed. “Yes…” She replied, “So don't worry. It makes no difference if he knew or not.”

Hurry up and end already, she doesn't want to talk anymore. She just wants to rest now.

Israel felt that there was something wrong, Poland as well felt it.

But they both didn't pry anymore.

[Is that all?]

Italy still has something to say when Germany, who was her fanatic believer, as well as the most noisy one when it comes to calling her goddess this, goddess that, suddenly revealed his marks and stop him from speaking.

Hearing no reply, philipia added, [make sure to tell the others] and the call ended there.

The pressure that was exuded by Germany immediately disappeared. Italy took a deep breath while Jack now had a slight PTSD when it came to a leaders pressure.

“Why did you stop me?!” Italy exclaimed, grabbing Germany's collar.

Germany stared at him blankly, “That wasn't goddess...” he said.

Everyone looked at him.

“Goddess... I can't feel her anymore.”

China added, “I can't as well...”

Now everyone was looking at each other. Italy was still at a loss and irritated, “What the hell are you talking about? Keep speaking in riddles and I'll riddle your face with holes if you want!”

“I said!” he shouted, “Goddess is gone. I'm not speaking in riddles because what I said is literal. Goddess is gone.” His goddess no longer exist.

Poland's eyes suddenly welled up in tears, “Germany you're scaring me. What do you mean Philis is gone?”

Germany no longer spoke. He removed Italy's hand from him, stood up and left.

The living room was quiet. They understood what he said but at the

same time they didn't.

Philipia is gone but at the same time she's there...

Why does it feel so... Lonely?

_____

【 Egypt is still shocked by what happened. ⁑ (□ᗜ□*) 】

Chapter 42

Philipia never contacted them again after that. When China tried to visit her at the hotel she was staying, he was given the news that the female leader staying there had left a week ago.

When he tried to look for her again, his informants were blocked by something—or *someone* and could no longer locate her.

“It must've been Tethys.” he grumbled when he ended the call with his men.

“What about Tethys?” North asked without looking at him.

China ignored the man and resumed his work.

North wasn't bothered by his silent treatment, “Files from the female academy is even more complicated of that in the male. There's so much going on, from the dorm they're staying to the bathroom sink not working or the shower not hot enough or not cold enough. I'm about to lose hair here.”

“I bet you'd look good bald.” China mocked in a sarcastic tone. He signed a few papers and typed on his computer.

North ignored the mocking tone, “Isn't being bald a trend in your country before?”

Snap—!

The pen broke from China's hand. He calmly threw the pen in the trash and takes out another one.

“Are you done North? Are you done?!”

“No”

“……”

Fucking bastard.

He had just mocked North in his heart when the door was pushed open and South stomps in. “Fuck! Why the fuck am I still in the same class as that asshole!? (Atlantis)”

North glanced at him lightly, “I wasn't the one who arranged you.”

“Then who did?!” he was fuming!

China looked at him while typing on the keyboard, “I did and the reason? Because you have the same status and that your grades have the same percent. If you failed one subject, maybe you wouldn't be in the same room.”

South berates, “Oh, so you're saying I should've failed a subject to avoid that asshole?! Why do I have to be the one to adjust?! He's new here, I've been here longer than him!!”

China gave a simple reply, “Not my problem now. But if you really don't want to be in the same room as him, take this.” he gave south a paper. “It's a permission note, sign your name and give a reasonable explanation to the principal why you don't want to be in the same room as him.”

South clicked his tongue in annoyance, grab the paper and gave North a middle finger when walking out.

“Close the door.” North directed.

South Retorted, “You close the door yourself bastard! Bleh!” he sticks out his tongue and ran away.

North's forehead bulged for a second before he immediately calmed down and closed the door.

China said sarcastically, “I never had a brother because I'm an only child—I envy you, Tsk tsk.”

“……”

...

Philipia finally received her new uniform. It was a simple white shirt, blue necktie, blue skirt, and blue jacket. While the male had the same style but green.

The green color had always been the color for the male while the blue for the female. Now that the school merged, philipia finally got to wear the blue uniform.

If it was Filipia, she could've loved the color blue. Philipia on the other hand, isn't fond of any color.

Because no color made her interested yet.

She sighed and washed and dried the new uniform and hanged it inside the wardrobe.

She now left the hotel and searched for a new place to stay and found a small house in a different city.

She wanted to get away somewhere that nobody knows her. Of course she still can't get away from a certain someone (Tethys). But because she refused to see anyone, he did not see her anymore but sent someone else to check on her well-being.

At first, she asked not to come anymore and tell Tethys that she's okay. But gradually, she got used to it. Anyways, they would send her groceries and she can even ask them for a favour like buying a snack she's craving in the middle of the night.

Anyhow, she wasn't persistent and was too lazy and didn't had the energy to refuse anymore. So she might as well take advantage of it.

The next day, it was Russia's graduation. She washed up her face and wore a simple shirt and pants. Philipia observed her face in the mirror and saw that her eyes were still the same dull color. When she fainted that day, she found out her eyes had lost its luster. The bright and diamond eyes were now like a dirty and poorly imitated one. But she wasn't sad about it, in fact, she was relieved. Now, she doesn't have to be so cautious and careful when someone looks at her in the eyes.

Nor would there be anyone who would suddenly turn into an

animal in heat around her. It somehow annoys her (philipia).

She quickly finished up, tied up her hair into a high ponytail, wore a different mask that she bought from the side of the road, then began to head out.

Philipia took the train and arrived at the city where the academy was located. She walked there by herself and stood in front of the entrance.

Many people were going in and out, the gate also had a decoration of flowers. At the side, outside, there were vendors selling ribbons, taking pictures, and even throwing white petals for celebration.

When Philipia was about to go in, someone ran behind her and hugged her, “Starshine!”

It caught Philipia off guard. If she (the person behind) didn't speak, she would've broke that person's arm and throw her on the ground. Luckily, such tragedy didn't happen.

“H-hello belarus.” she greeted awkwardly.

Belarus lightly punched her shoulder, “Omg! Why do you sound so polite? Aren't we close?”

If she has to be honest, they're not close. Both Belarus and Filipia didn't spend much time together due to Belarus' being busy all the time, and after her successful birth, she became even busier.

Speaking of. Tethys never mentioned what happened to Tokyo and her child.

Should she ask?

But she's too shy to ask, for fear he'd think she's too persistent and pretentious. She's afraid of being judged.

Belarus didn't notice the difference with Philipia due to low contact and pulled her inside the Academy. “When Russia told me he's graduating, I was so shocked! I didn't know so many years has gone by! Tsk. I've been so busy lately that I don't even have time to date

my husband.”

Along the way, Belarus had been talking nonstop and Philipia had long stopped listening halfway and focused more on observing the decorations. There were lanterns, paper ribbons on the branches on the trees, fireworks, cut pieces of papers, banners, etc...

It was both blinding but at the same time, it was lively. Too bad, Philipia can't seem to enjoy the liveliness and felt that everything was too noisy and messy.

She just wants to go home quickly.

When they got to the gym, it was filled with chairs for the parents/guardian and chairs for the students. The graduating students wore their green graduation gowns and caps, the tassel on the cap were gold and the shape of a winter flower that symbolizes Pangaea.

They were scattered and had their own groups, some were taking pictures, talking to their parents, at the backstage helping the staff, and some remained seated on their chairs.

“Wowww~ it wasn't even that long after the autumn massacre, but they sure look alive and energetic.” Belarus laughed, unaware that her dark humor doesn't seem to be understood by everyone, and anyone who was near her, heard her and gave her a weird look.

“.....”

“Ah! Russia messaged me, he said he's at the corner by the left side of the gymnasium...” she read and began looking around. “Wait, which left? My left side or his left side?”

Philipia didn't reply and wanted to get away. Just because she came doesn't mean she wants to see him, she simply wanted to pay her respect. If he doesn't see her, she can just say she did attend, he just didn't see her and went home directly. At least she's not lying to anyone and really did attend.

But Belarus doesn't seem to notice her struggle and held her close to her side. “left side, left side, left side...” she muttered while walking at the right side of the gym.

Russia wasn't that far. Just like his sister, he was also looking around. When he saw Belarus pulling Philipia, he fixed his cap and took a deep breath before he strides over towards them with a gentle smile.

“Ah! Russia! Over here!” Belarus waved.

No! Let go! AAA!! Philipia internally screamed.

When their eyes met, both parties were taken aback.

Russia didn't wear his usual hat and his hair was neatly combed back, showing his forehead well-defined chiseled face and electric blue eyes. While Russia was surprised because Philipia wore a different mask.

“Russia~ congrats~ here's my gift to you!” Belarus handed a crumpled envelope. “After stressing it over last night, I finally found a perfect gift for you.”

Russia curiously opened the envelope and saw a check of a hundred million. He furrowed his eyebrows and stated, “I'm not short on money.”

“Oh you aren't? How weird. Meh, anyways, the gift is already there just take it. Pretend it's a pocket money.”

His pocket money is worth more than a hundred million.

“.....”

Sighing, he looked at his sister helplessly but was still thankful. It's the thought that counts anyways. Next, he glanced towards Philipia who was quiet as a mouse next to her, “What about you sunshine? Do you have a gift?” he winked playfully.

Philipia felt like a knife cut through her heart when he called her ‘sunshine.’

Truth be told, she liked that name. But it did not fit her. She wasn't a sun nor was she shining like one, she was a gloomy and sad cloud gathering rain.

But philipia nodded, took out a letter from her bag and handed it over. Russia didn't expect to receive a gift and thought it was another envelope of money.

“Letter... read it....after” She said in concise words. It is already a miracle she can still stand properly despite the nervousness.

Russia blinked a few times but felt a warm current running in his whole body as though he was doused in sunshine.

Belarus saw him beam up like a lightbulb and couldn't help but roll her eyes. He didn't even react to her gift but reacted happily like a teenage boy when he received the letter.

“A letter, thank you, sunshine.”

Philipia didn't correct him. It is his special day and last day. After this, they won't see each other anymore so there's no point in correcting him.

When the event was about to start, Russia turned to his heel and went towards the student area and to his designated sit.

Belarus hurriedly pulled her towards a chair but philipia took her hand away, “No go....I'm going home.” she's already tired.

Belarus tilted her head, “Why? Aren't you gonna watch?”

Philipia shakes her head. Belarus didn't understand why she would just leave. But considering the fact that they weren't really close to begin with, she wave goodbye and watch her leave the gym, skillfully avoiding contact with people.

“Why do I feel like starshine isn't starshine?”

When Philipia left the gym, the school was now a bit empty. Most of them came to watch the ceremony anyways.

As she walked around the campus, she heard a loud sound of clattering. When she was about to investigate, she heard a loud moan and Atlantis' laughter.

“……”

Why does she still have Filipia's habit of investigating? This is why she's always getting in trouble and why Atlantis didn't like her.

“Why are you still here?”

Philipia flinched and looks back and saw South looking at her in confusion. “Didn't you say you had something to do?”

Her? Since when? She just got here.

South also felt her confusion and scratch his head, “Huh? Was I scammed and tricked?”

Philipia didn't reply and was about to leave when South chased after her, “Aishh! Anyways, since you're still here, let's go and watch Russia's graduation.”

Philipia shook her head.

“Why not?”

“Don't wanna...”

South looked at her for a moment before he pats her head, “I understand. I heard about you fainting in a crowd, so how about we go and watch it from afar?”

Philipia still shook her head. South wasn't disappointed, “Same, why should I watch a boring ceremony anyways? How about we go somewhere? Cosmos, Iran, and Vietnam found this perfect spot for stargazing.”

Philipia thought for a moment but still shook her head. As much as possible, she does not want to be involved with anyone with a close connection with Filipia.

It makes her feel like she stole her place.

South pouted but still nodded, “Alright. How about we go outside and find a quiet place to rest and drink a warm coffee? Look at you,

you're not even wearing a jacket and winter had just ended."

Philipia hugged herself, only now did she realize she was wearing too little.

"Hey, you seem a little out of it. What's wrong? Are you missing Russia because he's going to leave?"

What? Why would she? If it was Filipia, perhaps she would. But recalling the times Filipia and Russia were together, in Russia's eyes, there were desires in it. Although love and desire are the same thing, he desired her more than he loved her.

Thus, philipia really felt nothing towards him. The letter she gave him was a letter Filipia wrote in advance for him. She was simply passing it on and nothing else. After this, there would be no more connection with him.

Russia is one of the people she wants to avoid.

"No, not miss..." If it was through call, philipia could speak long sentences, but if it was face to face, her words appeared short and concise and straight to the point.

Because she's a cowardly person who can't speak properly, and an autistic leader who can't look at you straight in the eyes and have a proper conversation.

"Oh, I thought you would miss him. That's okay, I also don't haha~" he laughed. "Anyways, have you seen your new classmates for this new school year?"

South began to talk to philipia as they walk. Although philipia would reply from time to time, she was mostly quiet and silent. South wasn't used to it at first, but he does have a strong adaptability and was able to converse smoothly not long afterwards. Philipia also soon felt a bit comfortable but she simply listened to him talk.

In the south building of the academy that faces directly at the gate, China stood at the second floor, watching South and philipia walk out of the school. Besides him were Spain and America.

“Philipia has changed.” America sighed dejectedly. “You said, the philipia right now is someone else? How are you so sure?”

China held his hand and showed his marks, a thin thread of yellow and red smoke was extending towards philipia but quickly vanished. Like a cord that was cut off.

“I can feel it.”

America frowned.

“It was like the time her alter Red fronted. She also felt a bit faded but not to the point of which it doesn't seem to exist.” China explained. “And...”

Spain and America both looked at him, “I'm going to make a wild guess.” he added.

“What wild guess are you talking about?” Spain asked impatiently.

China watch both of their backs (South and philipia) getting further away. “I guess... that the philipia right now, is the *real* philipia.”

Spain and America taken aback.

“What do you mean real philipia. If she's the real one then who...” America could not find the right words. Who was she—or was she even a person in the first place? Who was she? Who was the philipia they spent their time with? An alter? A different personality?

Spain reacted more calmly. He took a deep breath, leaned against the window and confessed, “is it wrong of me to feel relieved? is it wrong to think ‘Thank goodness’ when the person whom I thought I hurt was actually someone else?”

China replied, “Yes. But I commend your honesty... but, I felt the same.”

America looked at the two men. Only he was still digesting over the fact that the philipia he knew was actually someone else and that the real ‘philipia’ had just come out.

“Then she's not mahal?”

China shakes his head.

America finally calmed down. He looked towards the gate of the school again but can no longer see the person he wanted to see.

“But I never get to say goodbye...” he never got to confess his feelings.

This was something out of his expectations. He prepared himself both mentally for the moment he confesses his feelings to her, but life seems to enjoy their pain. The philipia he knew was actually an alter, he fell in love with an alter.

But why now? Why did the real ‘philipia’ had to come out now?

China sighed, “There is no point contemplating about it Joe. that is just how life is.” he turn to his heel and left. The sound of his footprints echoed in the empty second floor hallway.

Spain also left on the opposite direction. Now, only America stayed. Still looking over at the gate where vendors and enthusiastic people are at.

Suddenly, his phone rang. He answered the call, “Bro? What's up?” he's really not in the mood to listen to his problems right now.

Canada, on the other side of the call, looked at the paper on his hand. The paper was a notice for the school that he won't be attending Pangaea academy anymore.

[I want to see philipia...]

【 ʅ(¯.¯“)□】

Chapter 43 : Chick Imprint

[image]

【 (≧▽≦) 】

_____

America frowned. He inquired, “Why? What's wrong?”

Canada pursed his lips. He threw the papers on the coffee table and observed his surroundings. The high window, the scarlet curtains, and the Victorian style living room. His expression was impassive and his eyes were bitingly cold.

“I just want to see her...No, it should be that I want to show her something.”

America felt something was wrong, “What do you want to show her?”

Canada was quiet for a second, [Joe... There's a war coming. The world is going back to that era where everything is nothing but chaos.]

“What do you mean... bro, you're not making any sense right now! I'll call Aust and Zea!”

[Just take philipia... All of you as well. There's something I want to show you.]

The call ended.

America stared at the screen before it turned off. The screen blackened and his reflection could be seen.

On the other side, Canada threw his phone away, shattering it to pieces. Although he was impassive, although he was expressionless, his hands were trembling from anger.

“Make sure you don't regret it... Canada.”

Canada turned to the woman sitting on one of the sofa, smoking a pipe while wearing a feathered hat and gown.

“I should ask you instead. Mother.”

France or Gaul, mother of the four leaders and wife of UK, drank her tea leisurely.

“I have been married for over a hundred and more years with him. What else should I regret? Regret being beaten because he lost his beloved? Regret that he chose me to acquire more power?”

Canada scoffed and rolled his eyes. “Is it my fault?” he sat down and held his forehead, “Whatever. I don't care. Now that he's about to start some shit, I might as well expose his dirty secret to his sons, as well as to the daughter of his departed lover.” he said. His eyes glinting with a cold light.

...

Philipia and South walked around for a while before they found a quiet but relaxing café not far from the academy. Philipia sat on her chair and held the cup of coffee and warm her palm.

“Whew, that's cold. I still can't believe you didn't wear any jacket and forgot about it.” South sat down and shivered.

Philipia was naturally a warm blooded person, thus she's a bit immune to the cold such as this. But for South who lived in a cold country, was already freezing even just by looking at the casual appearance of Philipia sitting across him.

South took a sip from his sweet and slightly bitter chocolate cocoa drink. “So, how are you these days? How was your winter break?”

Philipia recalled her winter break before she shook her head.

“That bad huh? That's fine. My winter break wasn't any better, that Atlantis guy? He's a jerk! An asshole! First, he was placed in our classroom, then he's now in the same room as I am! It's ridiculous!

Good thing I asked for permission if HE could change classrooms, not me!” South continued on his complaints and rants while Philipia remained quiet and listened.

Earlier, she almost walked in on Atlantis ‘doing’ someone else again. If he caught her, it would've been awkward.

“Hey, are you listening?”

Philipia snaps back to reality and looked up towards South who was looking at her. “Are you there?” he asked, waving his hand on her face.

Philipia nodded shyly.

South sighed. “Alright, you seem to have a problem yourself. come on, I'll listen.”

Philipia pursed her lips and shook her head again.

“Aiisshhh. Philipia~ don't be so reserve and shy now. come on, your good friend South Korea is here to listen to your problems. Do you want to listen to K-pop while we're at it?”

Philipia shook her head vigorously.

“Oh, you don't like k-pop. I forgot.” South wasn't sad but he made a sad expression as he put his phone away.

Philipia still felt bad and suddenly grab his hand. South was startled but soon calmed down. He twisted his hand that was held and interlocked their hands together, “What's this? Are you flirting with me?”

Philipia: ?????????????? O∀O

South grinned, showing a row of teeth that shows how happy he is. “This is the first time you took the initiative to hold my hand. Hmm hmm~ you are warm haha.”

Philipia wanted to take her hand away from his grip but his hold was strong and stayed interlocked with his.

“T-that...” if it was through the phone, she might have a bit of courage to speak one or two more sentences. But she can't talk properly when facing someone directly!

South was amused by her reaction. It was too new, too fresh and quite a bit addicting.

South suddenly stood up and pulled philipia up with the other. Their hands still interlocked.

“Let go...” she pleaded with so much difficulty.

When they were about to leave the Café, a lot of people were looking at their way, causing philipia to shrink and subconsciously hide behind South.

South noticed her discomfort and felt even more happy and foreign. Such a philipia was too cute he can't help it!! Ahhhh!!!!

“Aissh, my dear, come here.” he said, loud enough for everyone in the café to hear before he wrap his hand around her shoulder instead, pulling her close to him.

Philipia was speechless and stiff. She could feel his body heat as well as his racing heartbeat. Behind the mask, her face was flush and her eyes were watery, and the dull and lifeless eyes suddenly glowed a bit.

Like a flower coming back to life.

When they finally left. Philipia struggled from his embrace and took a step back, taking a mouthful of breath.

South wasn't any good either. No matter how gentlemanly he is, he still has his own limits. Hugging the person he likes with such a cute reactions, he almost wanted to kneel and beg her to let him live because his heart was about to explode!

“Ahhhhh....what to do.” he said in his language. Which brought a different type of appeal.

“Don't hug...”

“Oh yeah, sorry about that. I just saw how uncomfortable you were with their looks so I had to hide you away—wait, that just sounds weird! I mean. Well... I also... didn't know what came over me because you suddenly held my hand...”

The blood rushed to the tips of philipia's ears, causing it to redden visible to the naked eye. South on the other hand, both cheeks and neck were flushed red.

South coughed and tried to mediate the awkward situation. “Anyways, what were we talking about again?” oh right, he did most of the talking.

Philipia held the hem of her shirt, staring straight at South through the mask.

Suddenly, as if she was injected by a bit of courage. She mumbled, “South... if...”

South heard it and approached her, causing philipia to flinch and take a step back. “Don't come close!” she exclaimed.

South was surprised but he obeyed, staying a few feet away from her.

“Alright, I apologize for my rudeness earlier. Anyways, you were saying?”

Seeing him not get angry. Philipia felt a bit more courageous. She said, “I-if I wasn't... the philipia you knew. Would you be... angry?”

Philipia shut her eyes and pursed her lips hard. She expected to see shock and denial after finding out that the philipia they knew is gone. After all, base on Israel and Poland's reaction, Filipia meant a lot for them.

Filipia rescued and save Israel's life.

Poland was extremely fond of her due to her gentleness.

If it was her (Philipia), she wouldn't even bother to help Israel. Her country was already in trouble, why would she add more? And

Poland... She isn't friendly enough to be gentle with him.

Now, she confessed to South that she isn't Filipia. What would his reaction be?

South took a step forward and stop when he was only one length of finger away. He leaned down and tap her forehead.

“I can tell you're closing your eyes. Open them for me please?”

Philipia hesitated but still obeyed. Slowly opening her eyes, looking up to South who was a head taller than her.

Seeing her looking up to him, South gave a gentle smile. “So you're not the philipia I know—no wonder you feel so different” he said before he cleared his throat and extend a hand. “Well then, let me introduce myself. Hi, I'm South korea. Nice to meet you.”

It was as if all the heavy feelings she kept buried in her suddenly fell and disappeared. Her body felt light, she felt warm and fuzzy like cotton and warm milk.

“H-hello...” she replied blankly, not expecting such a reply.

These days. She's been tormented by the fact that nobody can accept her, nobody can see her, nobody wants her. They wanted Filipia, the perfect ‘Philipia’.

For the first time, someone told her ‘Nice to meet you.’ as if her existence was finally acknowledged.

Philipia felt her nose turning sour, her eyes reddened and tears spilled from it. She accepted south's handshake and shook it, “Nice to meet you south... I'm philipia.”

I'm philipia.

It was just two simple words but it meant a lot.

South was startled when he heard her sobbing. “Wha—you, are you okay? D-do you need a pat? Wait, why would she need pat?” he asked himself, “Ahhh, I'm sorry if I said something wrong or I was

rude or something! Ahhh, don't cry don't cry!”

He looks around and saw everyone looking at their way, giving him a judgemental look as if he's bullying a weak and pitiful girl.

QAQ he did nothing wrong! He's innocent!

Philipia alternates from sobbing to laughing. She hadn't laugh in a while and didn't even realize how good it felt.

She shyly held South's sleeve and whispered, “Thank you. For noticing me and seeing me.”

South immediately became ecstatic. “Hahaha~ I heard about your situation so I'm quite aware of it now.” He's more open-minded after he took the time to research about her situation.

Philipia nodded, but behind her mask, her soft lips were curved upwards. Creating a gentle arc, a smile that truly and only belonging to her.

South took her somewhere quiet before he asked to remove the mask as he takes out a handkerchief. “I mean, if you really don't want to be seen. It's fine, you can have my handkerchief.”

Now that South is her only friend as the real ‘philipia.’ she didn't shy away and took off her mask.

“Whoah, what happened to your eyes?” South asked, looking worried.

Philipia almost forgot about her dull eyes. The courage she just felt was vanishing a bit. South saw that she was about to hide once more so he quickly held her wrist and appeased, “It's okay it's okay. Everyone has eyes, nose, lips, and ears. Look! I also have eyes!”

He blink his big and doe eyes. The brownish color lighten a bit due to the sunlight hitting his face.

“Okay.” she said blankly.

South sighed in relief. The new philipia sure is like a newborn child

that is easily hurt and would hide to protect herself. But this is also good, she's honest about her feelings and shows it in the most straight-forward way. Although it takes a lot of her energy to speak clearly, it's still much better.

Yep yep!

She's becoming more and more his type. And she's even cuter!

He began to wipe her face with his handkerchief and noticed that at the center of her iris, there was a clear contrast of light and dull. Perhaps, her eyes became this way was because of her recent mood?

After all, aren't the eyes the window to the soul?

“Ow...” philipia whimpered, pulling South back from his thoughts.

“ah! Sorry, did I hurt you?”

Philipia pouted and nodded, she pointed her cheek and saw that it was reddish due to the rough wiping.

South you animal! How could you hurt her face?!

South internally scolded himself before he started blowing on to it and tapping it with his finger.

Ah.... Why does it feel like his coaxing a kid who got an ouchie? Or is it just him?

Philipia on the other hand was so happy. She made her first friend by herself without any of her alters help! She really doesn't know how friends work without Filipia, thus, she simply became honest with her feelings and said ow if she's hurt, and cry if she feels sad. Only if it's with her friend/s.

If Italy saw this scene, it would be hard for him to imagine that the person who called them that night with the tone of a strict leader and dictator, is now acting like a baby, pouting in pain because her cheek was rubbed too hard. Italy might need to go back and get himself a psychiatrist.

Philipia was like a baby chick who imprinted South as her mother. Walking close to him, holding his arm, and even staring at him in a daze.

If it wasn't for his strong self control, South would've long fell on the floor and died of cuteness.

Just then, someone bumped onto philipia which caused her to stiffen and held his sleeve really tight in response.

The person hurriedly apologized and ran away, seemingly in a hurry.

“Hey, you okay?” South asked worriedly.

Philipia shook her head honestly.

Ah. His heart is gonna burst.

Philipia held her mask and it broke in half. It is to be expected of something bought just outside and not as sturdy as the mask Tethys gave.

“Oh, it broke.” South commented and held the broken mask. Philipia stared blankly at the mask and hid her face with his sleeve instead.

“Philipia, why are you so cute?”

Hearing his compliment, philipia felt like she was given a candy and is thrown in a land of sweets. Though, it still made her blush and shy away, hiding her face even more.

South laughed and ruffled her hair, the hue blue locks swayed and is now messy due to his action. “Ah, I'll fix your hair for you.”

They left the crowded side walk and went to a park that didn't have much people. He searched for a bench, made her sit there and walked behind her and pulled the hair tie.

“You don't need to...” Philipia hesitated.

South gave her a smile and made her face the front, “Relax, I know what I'm doing.”

Philipia was then reminded of when Tethys also fixed her hair. He made a beautiful crown braid but she had to destroy it when going to sleep. She did feel bad and tried to learn it by herself and even going as far as to watch a Metube tutorial.

But unlike Filipia, she doesn't have much knowledge on how to dress herself up, nor does she have the skills. She just takes what her hand could grab and wear them and that's that.

Like how she just wore a shirt and pants and forgot to wear a jacket. Fortunately she's warm blooded so she didn't get cold much.

Though, in the end, her hair was tangled and became even more messy. Thus, she simply brush it back and tied it into a ponytail. It's much easier.

“There! It's done.”

【 You can see that my style has changed. I've been influenced a lot by webtoons lately. □(´□ `)□ 】

Philipia's hair was tied to a low ponytail as it rested on her right shoulder. Although it looks good, the way it was tied was messy. Strands of hair were standing and falling all over her face.

“……”

Well. The one who is an expert when it comes to long hair is his bastard of a twin brother.

At the students council office, North suddenly sneezed.

China looked at him, “I showered.”

“Really? It smells awful.”

“……”

Next time, China wouldn't speak to him anymore.

South Korea salon fixed the hair of its first customer for an hour but the result was still the same.

“It's okay...” her hair is usually like this. It was really hard to style and tie.

“I'm usually good at these things.” South explained. “I don't know why my hands aren't good today.”

South looked at his hand concerned.

Philipia shook her head and left it as it is. Her hair was styled by her first friend South Korea. So she's still very happy.

Seeing her mood lighten up and never diminished, he couldn't bare to destroy his already-destroyed work for her. “Since you like it, then let's leave it.”

Philipia nodded happily.

“How about we go and find a new mask for you?” he asked, showing the broken mask. “Anyways, this mask is unusable—but didn't you have another mask? The one that looked scary and that only has two holes?”

Philipia hid the mask that Tethys gave to Filipia. Although it was the best mask that she could wear, she isn't comfortable with the fact that she's using someone else's things. That mask belonged to Filipia, it's wrong of her to use it.

South seems to have just understood it even if she didn't say anything. Looking around, he saw a few stalls open at the park then saw a stall selling masks and shawls.

“Over there.” he points. “I think that aunt is selling mask, let's see if you'd see something you like. If there's really nothing, I'll have someone make a new one for you.”

Philipia didn't refuse and automatically held his hand as they walk. South was startled at first before he held her hand back.

The park is usually a hotspot date for couples and two people

holding hands weren't uncommon. In fact, they didn't stand out much, aside from the fact that they're two leaders, they looked very much like any ordinary couples.

Alas, fantasizing and dreaming is really such a free thing.

South laments.

The two of them stood in front of the stall and the aunt selling there beamed and enthusiastically greeted, “Good day leaders, are you here to buy a mask? The spring festival in Tethyria is coming up! I'm sure it's going to be a blast!”

“I've heard about it!” South replied with a smile and turns to Philipia, “Last year, we only had the spring dance. But this year, we're gonna have the spring festival! There's gonna be a lot of stuff! I heard that all type of spring festival tradition all over the world will be implemented.”

Philipia stared at his smiling and lively expression and couldn't help but be influenced by it. Her lips curved into a happy smile, looking at South gently.

Although she simply sees him platonically as her very first friend as ‘philipia.’ in the eyes of the aunt, the female leader was looking at the young man with love in her eyes.

“you young couples are really lovely hahaha.” she laughed.

South flinched and stuttered on his words, “That... we are not... well.”

Philipia was also surprised, but with her quiet and introverted nature. She couldn't say a word of denial and could simply hide behind South. Which only caused the aunt to misunderstand more.

The aunt thought they aren't official yet. Tsk tsk, kids these days.

“Alright, alright, you're not.”

South can tell she didn't believe him and was helpless against it. He quickly changed the topic and asked for a mask that looks

interesting.

Both Philipia and South examined a few before philipia was finally satisfied with one. It was a simple gray mask, two holes with a blue paint splashed on it.

“Oh, how about trying a shawl? your girlfriend is really pretty, it's a pity to just hide it.”

Although they weren't a couple, hearing someone calling Philipia his ‘girlfriend.’ he felt a sense of happiness in his heart.

Besides...

He secretly glanced at Philipia.

She doesn't seem to mind?

Philipia no longer tried to hide and accepted the suggestion of the aunt and took a black shawl that looked pretty and simple, ignoring the fact that she was called south's girlfriend.

“Here, I'll help you wear it.” south took the black shawl, he unveiled it and placed it over her head. Philipia's head was covered by the soft satin shawl, it covered half of her face, showing only her nose and pink lips.

Although that wasn't what the auntie was thinking, if it is what the customer wants, she won't say anything.

“I think this shawl is much easy and breathable than a mask. What do you think?”

Philipia seriously thought about the pros and cons of a mask and veil and thought that a mask is more convenient than a veil.

Seeing her holding the mask instead, he smiled at her helplessly but still bought the shawl.

“Hey, it looks great on you, it makes you look mysterious. I can't even see half of your face.”

South adjusted the veil on her head again and even turned it into a hijab style. But it gave a sense of unbalance and wrongness, as if it was inappropriate.

“How about you keep the shawl, like this...” south encircled his hands around her waist and wrapped the shawl around the hips and tied it on one of the hooks of her pants. Now it gave her a style that fits her well.

“Very cute very cute!” the auntie gave a thumbs up.

Philipia nodded shyly at the auntie and leaned closer to South, as if he was her pilar of support.

After they thanked the auntie and bought a new mask with a shawl, they left the park and headed towards the train station.

The auntie was arranging her items when another customer came. She looks up and her eyes beamed into a crescent, “oh my, you're back. Did you forget something?”

At the station, South waited with Philipia for the next train to arrive. They stood just a bit further from the yellow line.

Philipia held his arm the whole time while South was looking around, a little awkward and stiff. In order to break away the silence between them, South spoke, “So you live somewhere far away from the academy now.”

Philipia replied with a nod.

“Care to tell?”

Philipia looks at him and hesitated. Although she's very happy to have a new friend, she prefer not to reveal where she lives.

Seeing her hesitation, south tapped her forehead and grinned slyly, “Just kidding. No worries, I don't really mind where you are now, all that matters is that you're okay, you're safe, and you're comfortable.”

Philipia pursed her lips. Feeling as if she was about to cry once

more.

The train arrived, bringing along a gentle gust of wind, blowing away the hue blue strands, swaying like a gentle leaf dancing on the wind.

When the train stopped, the door opened.

South placed his hand on her back and patted, “Go now. You have my number, you can always call me, message me and go out with me. I'm a free person afterall.”

Philipia nodded. She slides her hand from his arm to his hand, pulls it and gave his palm a soft, fluttering kiss.

“Take care...south.” she said and entered the train.

When the door closed, Philipia looks back through the window and saw South standing there frozen in place, his hand still midair when she kissed his palm. She tilted her head to the side in confusion and only realized how ambiguous her action was.

South, on the other side of the train, was left speechless. He saw Philipia swaying her hand in nervousness, perhaps only realizing what her action meant. Aside from being surprised, touched, and moved, he felt his heart beating really fast as though it would come off his chest any moment.

He mouthed a ‘Take care’ and the train slowly moved and left.

He stayed there for a while before he held his palm, that was just kissed, close to his heart and left the station in a brisk walk.

...

Atlantis just came back after soaking in the beach near the academy when he bump into South, who also just came back.

“Heh. You look like you've had a successful date.”

South stopped in his tracks and turned to Atlantis who was drenched from head to toe. He said, “Since I'm in a good mood, I

will be benevolent enough to reply to you that it did. My date was very much successful.”

Atlantis scoffed, “Who asked?” he rolled his eyes and walked towards the gate.

“……”

South's eyes followed after Atlantis who was drenched before he went in as well.

_____

【 (●´⌓'●) 】

Chapter 44

【 There will be depiction of sexual violence, abuse, incest, and intentional rape. Please don't read any further and ask for a spoiler instead if you don't want to feel uncomfortable. Thank you (◜‿◝)♡ 】

———————

When Philipia arrived home, she went to her room and was about to change her clothes when she stop in-front of the full body mirror. She noticed the black shawl wrapped around her waist before she pulled it out and examine it.

The shawl was soft and had a very good texture. It was thick but it didn't feel heavy and it had a bit of lace design. Philipia put it on over her head and adjusted it for a bit. She covered the upper part of her face while the lower part expose, giving her a sense of deja Vu.

Aside from that, the veil was very comfortable. She takes it off along with her clothes and put it in the washing machine and left it there to wash and dry for 60 minutes then changed to a more comfortable outfit.

She went to the fridge and thought about what to cook when she recalled Filipia cooking curry for her friends on one occasion. Even if there were a bit of muscle memory, she still ended up burning herself, cutting her finger with a knife, crying from the onion, and even forgot to dry the pan before putting the oil and ended up with a fireworks display of water and oil colliding.

“……”

She's not fit to be a cook.

She stared at the black mass of unknown food in the bowl and didn't hesitate to spread it on a baking sheet, baked it until it

became crisp and crunchy, broke them into small square pieces, went outside, and fed the birds that was immediately attracted to the smell and flocked around her.

Philipia threw the bits and pieces of food and even saved a small amount of the unknown food, mixed it with rice and fed it to the stray cats and dogs that were hiding not far from her.

Fortunately, the animals still ate it.

Philipia went back inside after doing all of those, grab her keys and took a jacket this time after hearing south's comments about not wearing a jacket. She zipped it up all the way to her neck and left the house, going straight to a small restaurant that was just a 10 minute walk from her home.

Seeing that there wasn't that much people, she fixed her mask in place, pulled the collar up from her jacket and went inside to order a takeout.

Finally home again, she poured the takeout in a plate and was about to eat her dinner when her door was knocked three times.

Philipia frowned. She put her fork down, quietly slipped back in the kitchen, took a shotgun under the sink as well as a kitchen knife from the drawers.

“Who is it?” she asked but received no response. Instead, the person behind the door knocked again three times, this time, it was a bit slower and more patient.

Philipia felt something was wrong. Nobody knows where she lives except for Tethys, but if it was Tethys, he would've long answered—not knock on the door for the second time.

“I said who is it?!” she exclaimed. Her voice loud and clear. Her expression was cold and expressionless. None of the cute reactions she showed to South earlier.

Suddenly, the door was kicked open and Philipia didn't hesitate to throw the knife at the person. But that person caught the knife in a timely manner and threw it back at her.

Philipia quickly dodged and rolled on the side, loading her shotgun, she aimed at the person and pulled the trigger.

Bang—! Bang—! Bang—!

Three consecutive shots were fired. The muzzle of the gun still emitting smokes. Philipia didn't stay in one place and run to another hiding spot, still within the kitchen.

Although she fired, she didn't hit the person who invaded her house. That person was slippery and even casually avoiding her bullets. Everything went too fast for her to see who it was. But what was strange was that the knife she threw was in a perfect angle and the strength used was just right, yet the person caught it as though catching a soft ball and threw it back.

Philipia searched for the knife and saw it embedded in the cutting board that was hanged on the kitchen wall. It stabbed at the very center and even passed through it. You can tell the person used so much strength when throwing it back.

If she was even a step too late, that knife would've embedded her head instead. That was where she was just standing just now... The thought of it made her sweat and tremble.

But before she could dwell further into it, there came the sound of clear footsteps walking around the living room, as if the person was taking a tour and observing the house.

It took Philipia a few seconds before she recognized who those footsteps belonged. Calm, unperturbed, strong, and brought with it a heavy pressure. “Brother...” She called.

“What are you eating? What is this? Is this a take out?” Martial chuckled and picked up the shell casing of the bullet she just fired and glance at the table with her dinner on it before he dropped the shell casing on the glass of water.

Philipia sighed and stood up. She appeared behind the counter and looked towards Martial who picked up the fork, stab a piece of meat from the plate and ate it.

“Hmm... the taste is so-so... Definitely not something you would buy and eat...” He casually said before he looks at her, “It feels like you're someone else.”

Philipia flinched but soon calmed down. “Whatever do you mean, brother?”

“That, right there. Philipia doesn't speak too formally with me.” he pointed out.

Philipia was silent.

“Tell me...” he said then takes out a golden gun and aimed it at her head. “Which alter are you?”

Philipia looked calm on the surface but inside, she was trembling from fear and indignation. She was his real sister yet... He wanted Filipia instead.

“I'm not an alter.” she replied with a shaky voice.

Martial narrowed his eyes, the mismatch colored irises glowed. Before she could even react, Philipia suddenly felt her entire body stiffen and fell on her knees on the floor.

Thud—!

Her marks appeared and even her dull eyes was ignited, as though fighting against the same species with the same power. Unfortunately, Philipia was like a newborn calf going against a lion.

It wasn't long when her marks also disappeared and her eyes dimmed, leaving only a little bit of light.

“Brother. I am Philipia, I'm not an alter!” she exclaimed, holding her throat as the air pressure kept squeezing her insides like it was about to burst.

Martial didn't lower his gun nor the pressure. He remained silent and watch Philipia trembling and whimper while on her knees. After a while, he pulled back the pressure and hid his gun.

“I see...” he said.

In the moment he was quiet, his mind was actually working really fast and thought of a lot of possibilities before he came to a conclusion.

“You're the real one.” he stated.

They are all real. All of her alters are real, individual people.

Philipia thought, but didn't bother to correct him and took heavy deep breaths. Now that she was spared, she finally had time to process about what she saw.

Martial's eyes were glowing exactly like hers.

Then it means, he can also do what Armageddon could do—and may even have mastered it.

“Was the Philipia before an alter? A personality of yours?” he asked, his eyes scanning her entire body.

Philipia felt uncomfortable and couldn't help but crawl back a bit. “Yes...” she replied.

Although Martial was the first person who guessed it almost immediately, she did not feel the least bit ecstatic—Instead, she felt fear.

“I see... What a pity. She was so easy to control—you on the other hand, seems to be stubborn type.” He smiled and kneeled down on one knee and grab her chin, lifting her face up to look at him.

“But my little sister is still my little sister after all.”

Philipia looked at Martial in fear yet the latter returned a warm smile.

He examined her face left and right and even looked at her eyes intently. Seeing the dull and lackluster color, he wasn't disappointed nor angry, but instead, worried.

“What happened? Your eyes are lacking colors, are you perhaps in a bad mood these days, little sister?”

Philipia didn't reply, even as far as shutting her eyes close in response, showing her vehement attitude not to reply to him.

Martial thought it was a cute response and even gave her lips a peck.

Philipia was so frightened and disgusted that she subconsciously tried to push him away—but Martial was faster. He used his eyes again and lock her in place as though there were chains keeping her immobile.

“Ngh!”

“The Philipia I know wouldn't push me away, nor would she be so disgusted whenever I give her a peck.”

“Let go! Let me go you perverted basta—*slap*!”

Philipia was unable to finish her words when a sharp pain of leather hit her on the right side of the face. As she was about to face him, Martial slapped her again.

Slap—!

“And the Philipia that I know wouldn't speak such vulgar words...”

Enduring the stinging pain as regret overflowed her insides. She said through gritted teeth, “Fuck off... you incestuous bastard...”

If she could turn back time, she wouldn't hesitate to pull the trigger once more even if she found out it was Martial standing there.

Martial narrowed his eyes and the pain increased on Philipia's body. It felt like a billion ants were gnawing on her skin and bones. It was so painful yet she was still completely awake. Unable to scream, unable to yell, unable to fight back.

If this is what Armageddon can do, then she can go to hell for all she cares! This damned skill was so troublesome that she grew

annoyed.

And in response to her annoyance, it fueled a bit of her body and made her eyes glow a bit brighter once more.

But still, a newborn is still a newborn. She was still surpassed by Martial's who got to master and even perfected his gifts.

“Ahh... so you know what incest is? Congratulations in growing up, I was wondering when you'd remain oblivious behind its meaning. I guess your alter (Filipia) was in denial to the point she would automatically ignore obscene words.”

Suddenly, the whole room felt cold. It was the type of cold that could make one break into a cold sweat.

“But since my little sister is big enough to understand the word, let your big brother teach you how it is done.”

Martial leans down, pried her mouth open with his leather fingers and kissed her roughly.

Even though she was bound by invisible chains, that seems to contain spikes and thorns everytime she moves.

Philipia still struggled as hard she could.

But the more she fights back, the more painful and tighter the binding gets.

What the hell kind of skill was this?!

Philipia roared in her heart.

It felt like it had a life on its own, completely following the subconscious of its master (Martial).

Martial pushed her on the floor, takes out a knife, and cut her shirt apart.

The sound of ripped fabric echoed in the living room.

Unfortunately, the house was separated from the close neighborhood. It was desolate, alone, and far from the bustling streets and city.

It was the perfect house to be alone and a house for relaxation. But it is also the perfect place for dangerous things to happen. Such as the situation now.

She really shouldn't have chosen such a house! A place that is still bustling is still better than here! Even if it's noisy and loud, at least she isn't alone!

“Please. Don't... why me. Why... why do this?! I've done nothing wrong! You should be protecting me! You should be keeping me safe and away from harm! but why... please, why... why are you doing this?!” Philipia cried, golden tears streaming down her face, creating a clear contrast against the dark and dull eyes.

It was as if a god had descended and was stained with filth in the human realm.

Martial whispered in her ear, like a devil that was about to commit blasphemy. “No reason. Like how other men likes your alter (Filipia) I also don't need a reason. I simply love you so much—but I've waited long enough and now that you're very much aware of everything there is to know. I won't hesitate like I did a hundred years ago.”

Martial gave her neck the most softest, gentlest, and sweetest kiss he could give. In response, philipia shivered uncontrollably. Not from lust, but from fear.

“Time is running out for the both of us, for our country, and for the whole continent. Another war is about to start. Who knows when I would be able to get another chance like this?” he quickly placed his finger on her lips, “Ah ah. And don't say things like ‘You're in Tethyria. Aren't you afraid of what happens once Tethys knows what you're doing?’ but let me answer you this little sister.”

“He may be the leader of the whole continents, the leader who holds the most power, and the one who is obeyed by all. But he is

also a fake, a poor imitation of what's real. Who cares if he can sit high and mighty right now when he will soon fall to his demise... so worry not little sister."

Philipia's eyes fluttered, hearing such truth would undoubtedly shock anyone. Although Egypt -according to China's investigation- had told her about Tethys' situation, it was still hard to believe.

But Martial doesn't like to fabricate lies nor make up stories that has no bases. If what he said was the truth, then it is a legit information.

Martial cups Philipia's cheek and gave her another lust-filled kiss. "Let us just enjoy this moment. No one will come for you right away so we can take our time for however long we like."

"No... let me go! Let me go! Let us go!" Philipia pleaded, struggling with all her might. But the shackles tightened even more.

"Struggling is futile. This is what Tethys cannot do but I can do. No matter how strong you are, no matter if we're blood related or not. Once this power is used, you can't stop it. It's wonderful isn't it?" Martial smiled warmly at the end. Looking at her with passion and gentleness in his eyes, almost drowning philipia.

Philipia still struggled fiercely to the point she was trembling from the pain. But she didn't care. She wouldn't allow herself to be taken advantage without a fight.

Martial sighed helplessly and hoisted her up, carrying her into a princess style and entered the bedroom.

"Let me go! Let me go! Stop! Let me go!"

"Finally. Some alone time right? little sister."

Philipia felt her another wave of pain. Martial had used another one of his skill and made her weak and feeble. She sobbed and whimpered, still pleading in a hush tone.

"For one night, let us cut our blood ties as brothers and sisters. Okay? Philipia?"

...

China had just finished his job. Now, there won't be any more problems for the upcoming first day for the merged academy and he can finally have time to rest.

He went outside for some air and stretch his back and sore arms by the West garden.

“Mongrel China. It's rare to see you here.”

China glanced at Egypt and Nepal. They walked inside the garden while holding a basket of garden materials as well as a pot of Venus flytraps.

China raised a brow, “You're still up?” he checked his watch. “It's 11 pm.”

Egypt explained, “We had just finished taking care of my plants.” he then grinned and showed off his pot of Venus flytrap in his hand. “This precious little one is called Cleopatra.”

China glanced at the pot on Nepal's hand, “I'm guessing this is Caesar?”

Like those two power couple he often read about?

Egypt furrowed his eyebrows and looked at him in disgust, “Ew. Who names their flytrap with a salad?”

“.....”

“It's name is Cleopatricia. A female plant—I can't believe you'd just assume it's gender! Unbelievable.”

“……”

Nepal nodded in confirmation. While Egypt puffed up his chest with a proud look on his face.

China suddenly felt even more tired that his temple began to throb in pain. Why did he even decided to get some air in the west

garden? Why not at the north or south?

Suddenly, his phone started ringing. It was the sound of a guqin, a default ringtone for an unknown number.

Egypt thought it was such a boring ringtone and still thought his ringtone was more flashy and more youthful.

China answered. “Hello? China speaking.”

[…]

It was silent on the other side of the phone, with only the sound of someone's calm and gentle breathing.

China frowned and asked again, “Hello? Who is this? How did you get my number?”

Egypt and Nepal looked at him. China pulled his phone back and stared at the screen that still shows an unknown number still on-call.

[…]

“If you don't answer me right now, I will track your number and hunt you down.”

[…help]

Then, the call ended, followed by the sound of a message prompt. China, who was still processing what happened, checked the message and saw that it was an address.

“What's wrong?” Egypt asked.

China explained what just happened as he copied the address and paste it on a location app.

Egypt guessed, “It could be a wrong number?”

Nepal looked at him and shook his head. A leader's number isn't easy to access so a wrong number calling you is very unlikely to

happen.

China also thought the same. And when he recalled the voice just now, it sounded familiar but it gave the feeling of distance and loneliness.

The app immediately pointed the exact location somewhere far away from the academy that is about five stops of train away.

“Who...” the words just fell from his lips when another message was received.

Unknown: [Help...]

China looked at his watch and thought that he can still catch the last train before running off.

“Why are you running?!” Egypt exclaimed.

China replied, “I don't know!”

It was the truth, he doesn't know. But it felt like if he ignored this message, he will regret it for the rest of his life.

“What if it's a scam?!”

“Who would dare scam me?! And the only people who knows my personal number are limited to ten! One of them is philipia!”

Both Egypt and Nepal looked at each other before finally following after him. “Okay, we'll go with you!”

…

Philipia was laying on the edge of the bed, tired and exhausted.

While she was unconscious, she felt someone come in and stared at her by the door.

The person wasn't malicious, nor do they have ill-intent. They just stood not far from philipia and looked at her with a hint of helplessness and sympathy.

Philipia wanted to open her eyes and see who this trespasser was, but her body was devoid of energy. “Who...are you?”

The person moved and takes out a phone. The phone was dirty and filled with scratches but it operated normally. On the top corner, the date and time were messed up, even the weather on the front screen was glitching uncontrollably.

There was a moment of silence before the sound of dialing resounded in the quiet and cold room.

The dialing didn't last long before the call connected.

[Hello? China speaking]

【 Don't be angry with Martial, he's a good boi I promise ꒰ᐠ ᵕ ᵕ ᐟ꒱♡ 】

Chapter 45

【 Warning! There will be *angst* ❤□ 】

_____

Philipia felt like she was being moved to the center of the bed. Her arms, neck, and face were gently cleaned with a clean and warm cloth.

It took a lot of effort to open her eyes and see her surroundings.

“We can't just tell them...”

“What do you want me to do then? You've seen her condition, something must've happened to her!”

“Keep your voice down China. She is still resting, we'll see what we can do once she's awake.”

Philipia fluttered her eyes open, her eyelashes quivered like a fan. Nepal, who was holding a warm cloth, saw her open eyes and gently wiped her forehead.

He looked at her with the same expressionless face, but his eyes were gentle and soothing.

“Awake?” He whispered. The two men behind him still continued to discuss in a low voice.

Philipia swallowed hard and nodded.

“Shhh... take your time, just rest more my friend.”

Friend...

Is Nepal her friend of Filipia's?

Nepal saw her looking at him in a daze. He sighed, takes out a small

vial and leaned it close to her nose. “Egypt made this with the materials in the garden we made. It can help you relax your muscles.”

Philipia wasn't completely awake yet and unconsciously obeyed his words. His voice was kind and gentle, very calm and soothing as though lulling you to sleep.

She inhaled from the small vial and a minty and cool smell wafted to her nose. Her eyelids began to get heavier and heavier. Not long after, she fell asleep once again. But this time, it was more peaceful and relaxing.

Nepal sighed in relief, he put away the vial and resumed wiping her body but stop just as he was about to wipe her neck. He saw the dense hickies around it, like blooming purple flowers on a clean field. It was dark and it looked painful.

It wasn't the type of hickey that was filled with passion. But it felt like the person who placed them were mad, hungry, and crazy. There were even bite marks that was bleeding a bit around her collarbone and shoulder. There were also a faded bruise on her cheek and chin, as though someone grabbed her forcefully and make her face that person against her will.

But as he was about to wipe downwards, he saw the ripped shirt and another batch of hickies around her chest, stomach, abdomen and even further down.

Nepal breaths out a shaky breath and stopped. He couldn't even imagine what she has gone through. While he was out there tending and caring a plant, the person whom he cared about was suffering by themselves. He felt like he failed as a friend.

“How is she?” Egypt asked with his eyebrows still furrowing.

“She woke up just now.” he said, “but I put her back to sleep once more, she needs to rest.”

Egypt nodded and glanced back towards China who was walking around the living room back and forth. His expression was solemn

and agitated. His mind was in deep thought as he circled the whole house except the bedroom.

When they got here, they saw the house was a mess. Bullet holes were on the wall, a shotgun by the kitchen floor, an embedded knife on a hanged cutting board, untouched dinner, ripped fabrics all over the floor.

But what shocked them the most was when they entered the bedroom. The bed was messy, the blankets and pillows fallen, and a lonely person lay on the edge of the bed. Her body was weak, filled with unimaginable traces, dense hickies around her neck and chest, red puffy eyes, and trembling.

Nobody could imagine how devastated and angry China felt at that moment. But fortunately, there wasn't any evidence of penetration, as told by Egypt, since he studied medicine to be a herbalist and have some medical knowledge about such common things. So he was confident nothing happened, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen in another way...

For now, Nepal placed her on the bed and cleaned her up while China and Egypt discussed if they should tell the others, especially her brother and Uncle. But recalling that time when she called them, her tone was vehement that she did not have any sort of business with the two. Especially now that China thinks that the true Philipia is back.

If it was Filipia that he grew up with, he would have the confidence to call her two relatives. But if it was this Philipia, he wasn't sure. She was completely different from the former that he didn't know what he was supposed to do. Thus, he could only walk around the house in agitation as Egypt and Nepal took care of her.

“Why... why would he do this, what am I missing? What am I missing?! Think China, come on, think clearly!” he exclaimed and stop in his tracks, stopping in the kitchen, right besides the shotgun still on the floor.

He glance at it momentarily and then froze. He slowly looked back down again and saw a shattered and broken phone.

He picked it up and examined it. He tried turning it on but it did not work, he even went to find the charger by the living room but it didn't work.

Calming down, he finally thought of the person who called him. Earlier, he was sure it was Philipia, but thinking about it now, before that person even spoke, the breathing was calm and gentle—not like a person who just went through something unimaginable.

He quickly takes out his phone, searched for the number again and called it. There was the sound of a dialling tone before he heard an unrecognizable ringtone from the bedroom.

“Huh? Mongrel China, why are you calling Anuket's phone?”

China frowned, stood up and slowly walked towards the bedroom. He saw another phone by the bedside table, flashing a bright light, ringing.

Nepal takes the phone and turned it off. He gave a rare angry look as he shot a glare towards China, “Can you be quiet?”

“Why does she have two phones?” He asked, almost in a trance. Ignoring Nepal.

Egypt thought it was a stupid question, “Why can't she? I have five phones myself. One is for personal, one is for games, one is for videos, one is for my plants, and one is for business.”

“I'm not talking about that—wait, where was this phone? Has it been on this table all this time?”

Nepal shook his head, “It was right there.” he points towards the study table that has an open notebook with a pen.

China walked towards it and picked up the notebook. There were words written on it.

[January.... No. February? When was it? What year is this?]

China frowned as he read the passage of sentences before he turn to the next page.

[Ah I remember. It was at this time... It felt like it's been a hundred years already...]

[He's still alive here. I want to see him one more time before he...]

[I'm running out of time again. I have to go back. I want to go back...]

Every sentences written were filled with loneliness, exhaustion, and melancholy. It felt like a traveller who had been walking for a thousand years with no place to call home nor place to take a rest. It was as if this person was so tired it did not want to live anymore.

But...

This is clearly Philipia's notebook.

He turned the papers and read the first page that were filled with notes on what to buy, what to eat, and even a recipe on how to cook a simple dish like a soup.

Yet it looked more like a research material than a recipe. It was detailed and even highlighted with different colors. He turned again to the pages of those sentences and compared the handwriting.

It wasn't the same. Yet it gave a sense of familiarity in a different way.

The first one, the one with the detailed recipe, was more focused, confused, and even a bit of naivety. But the other one was the one that was desolate and lonely.

Such clear contrast was like two different people.

But deep inside, China kept thinking they were the same person.

Who was this? Who wrote this? Who called them earlier?

After all of those, it was only but a few seconds in reality. Egypt was watching China turning the pages of the notebook back and forth and couldn't help but ask, “What are you doing?”

“Someone was here. Someone called me and asked for help.”

Egypt tilted his head, “Wasn't it Anuket?”

China shook his head, “She was unconscious and that phone isn't hers.”

Egypt was even more confused, “How are you so sure?”

“Don't you get it? Someone was here!” China exclaimed, his voice quivering from agitation.

Nepal frowned and Egypt's expression hardened. He berated, “If you don't explain properly how are we supposed to understand? Okay, someone was here, called you, left their phone and wrote some garbled nonsense on the notebook, and then what? What happened? Is it bad? Is it wrong? will Anuket become okay once you know?”

China was silent.

Egypt took a deep breath and said, “China, you're a calm person. You're rational and logical. Even if you guess most of the time, and most of time you're always correct. But right now, you need to compose yourself, think clearly, and calm down. Anuket is hurt, she's sleeping, she needs to rest. If you're so sure Anuket doesn't use two phones, okay, we get it, message received that you know Anuket more than anyone else. But in case you forgot. You told us she's not the Anuket we know, she's *philipia*. And she isn't the person you grew up with. So stop this baseless theories and gl take a walk!”

After saying all of that, Egypt huffed angrily and walked out, closing the door gently behind him.

China did calm down after. He looked towards the quiet and sleeping Philipia and the frowning Nepal. From the very beginning, he did not say much but was quietly watching and covering Philipia's ears.

Egypt was right. He was too agitated. He was just one person, one leader, and he can't do everything by himself. He was so stress that his mind became chaotic.

Taking a deep breath, he puts the notebook down and went outside after saying, “Call us when she's awake.”

Nepal didn't reply with a nod like he used to. Perhaps he also got irritated by his actions just now.

When it really comes to Philipia, his reasons would crumble into pieces. Making him unable to think straight.

Once China left. Nepal massaged the center of his forehead and looked towards Philipia. Her head was sinking in the soft pillow, making her look so peaceful and cozy.

He couldn't help but soften his eyes and his irritation vanishing a little.

He sat a bit closer, place his arms on the edge of the bed and use it to pillow his head. Like this, he would wake up and notice if Philipia is awake, it could also perhaps give her comfort that she wasn't alone.

Outside. Egypt was cleaning the living room while China decided to sit outside the porch. The house that Philipia chose was a perfect spot for someone who wants to be alone.

The neighborhood was far away and could not be reach by the noises and distraction. It was quiet and peaceful, but also lonely and distant.

He looked at the phone on his hand again and thought about taking the phone that called him. But thinking about Nepal's annoyed expression and Egypt's berate. He stop and remained seated on the stairs.

He sighed and wiped his face that had turned haggard. He played with his phone for a whole before he paused and turned his phone and called a number.

He still wanted to make sure about something.

At a club, there were many students and three leaders celebrating their graduation. Although one particular leader was a female and

throwing money at a lap dancer.

Russia was looking at his sister in confusion and doubt. Did her husband really allow her to do these things? Though, she does need a break, but this kind of ‘break’ is just weird.

But, seeing his sister happy and laughing, he couldn't bare to stop her happiness.

Whatever, it's not like he was the one who was married. He drank from the bottle of vodka as he starts to look around.

The club was dark and dim, with the neon lights flashing with different colors, the sound was deafening and loud that you could feel every beat of the bass.

Just then, Kazakhstan appeared from afar while prying a drunk and sexy dancer off of him. “Miss! I am gay! Don't touch me there please!”

Russia raised a brow when he heard his words. When Kazakhstan successfully pried the woman away as she was taken care of by a staff, he was relieved and went to get a drink.

“You're gay? Congrats I guess?”

Kazakhstan had just took a sip from his drink when he heard Russia's words. He was startled and choked on his drink. “What the hell! I was just saying that because that girl was harassing me! Nowadays, harassing a gay person is like harassing a woman! So of course I had to use that excuse!”

Russia nodded knowingly, “Righttt...”

“I am not gay!”

“Sure...”

“Damn it Russia! Just drink your vodka! I'm gonna go dancing!”

He asked for a bottle of beer and ran to the dance floor where the DJ had turned up the beat. The music became even more louder

and the people became energetic and chaotic.

Russia chuckled as he watch his friend stagger and dance like a creep. Just then, he felt his phone vibrate and didn't even doubt who it was before he answered the call.

“Hello?”

[Are you at a club, Russia?]

Russia raised a brow, “China? What? Is it wrong now to celebrate my graduation?”

China didn't reply and thought about how they were having fun while Philipia was suffering. But thinking about it, he did not have the right to say such things. So he said, [I wanna ask a question regarding about female leaders, is your sister with you?]

Perhaps the alcohol got to his head a bit, Russia misunderstood China's words, “Huh?! Are you trying to hookup with Belarus? Let me remind you, she's a married woman with a kid! You don't have a chance!”

China's temple throbbed in anger, [damn it Russia, I have no time to talk nonsense, just give your phone to your sister—and I don't care if she's married or not, with a kid or not, she's not my type]

“Are you saying she's ugly?!”

[No! It's just—just give your phone to her you drunk Russian!]

“I'm not drunk!”

[I don't care, just give her your phone!]

Russia rolled his eyes, drank a bit of vodka and staggered his way to a table where there was a lap dancer on Belarus. “Hey! Stop throwing money at your boy toy, someone wants to speak to you!”

[……] He's gonna pretend he didn't hear that.

Unlike Russia who was a bit drunk from vodka, Belarus was drunk

from ecstasy and happiness. Seeing her stupid brother interrupting her fun time and handing her a phone, she thought it was work related and couldn't help but throw him a disgust look and push his hand, “What the heck Russia! I thought I told you I wanna have fun!”

“This isn't work you idiot! It's China!”

Belarus was surprised. She and China aren't close nor do they have much communication, why did he want to speak to her?

“What? Why?”

Russia just shoves the phone to her and chug his vodka till it was empty, “Dunno hic— I'm going to get some more vodka.”

He turned and left, staggering towards the bar area.

Belarus rolled her eyes, place her ear on the phone while covering the other with her hand. “This is belarus speaking!” she yelled, due to the loud and booming music.

[I'm sorry to bother you at your free time, miss Belarus]

Hearing such a polite greeting, Belarus was happy. See? This is how you greet a lady!

“Oh no, no! It's okay! I should apologize instead! It's quite loud at my side so don't mind me if I'm yelling at the phone!”

China was understanding, [of course. I won't take much of your time so I wanted to ask if there are cases where injuries on a female leader doesn't heal?]

The moment Belarus heard his question, she immediately thought of starshine. After all, he seems to care for her a lot.

She answered, “There are cases where injuries and wounds don't heal!”

[Ah, so it does happen. There aren't much information about female leaders so I wasn't sure.]

Belarus almost couldn't hear what he said so she stood up and went to a more quiet and secluded area. When the loud music was a bit far, she sighed and said, “Yep. That happens and it's understandable if you're not aware, nobody really writes things about female leaders much, it's normal.”

[I see...]

“Did something happen to starshine?”

China internally applauded her sharpness. But he gave a vague reply, [In a way, yes]

Belarus could tell that he didn't want to talk about it, most likely, starshine didn't want him to talk about it or maybe it was also for the sake of starshine. Belarus didn't pry anymore and continued to explain. “Cases where female leaders can't heal their body can be for many reasons. For example, I prick my finger with a needle, for me, a needle isn't much and it didn't scare me enough so it can automatically heal. But what if I'm scared of bears and have a fear in bears? If one day, a bear attacked me, due to my fear overcoming my reasons, my body wouldn't heal immediately.”

[Then what if... You were hurt by a love one?]

Belarus could vaguely guess what happened. “Hmmm, in what way can a love one hurt you? Is it physically? Or mentally? Because a female leader needs to have a clear mind and isn't afraid of anything in order to heal their body. But if she was mentally tortured or abused in a way, if her body was attacked and injured, with a chaotic mind, she wouldn't be able to heal herself.”

“If starshine isn't afraid or wasn't afraid but was still injured. It means that someone must've done something horrible to her that she couldn't stand and was overwhelmed by either her fear, disgust, anger, or pain.”

“Although it sounded like it was just a small injury or wound. But for it not to heal, she must've been drained both spiritually and mentally and could possibly lead to trauma like any other normal person.”

“For example, I was so scared and traumatized when I have birth. The pain was so unimaginable that I forgot I could heal myself. But perhaps my state of mind wasn't okay, my body didn't heal. so it took a lot of time for me to recuperate from internal bleeding and tearing, down there.”

China listened to her explanation and felt like it did make sense. Philipia must've been so scared and terrified about what happened that her body didn't heal.

That time she cut herself, it was her alter who did it. That alter was naturally terrified of everything, thus, it didn't heal her body but at the same time she didn't want to.

[Can a leader not heal because she didn't want to?]

“That rarely happens. Only people with strong emotional changes and have strong control over their mind can do that. For a person to command their own body not to heal, that person must be invincible but at the same time, vulnerable.”

[Have you done that?]

“Nope. But I'm not too sure about other female leaders though.”

[I see. Thank you for your time miss Belarus, I learned a lot.]

“Haha～ no worries, it's rare for a leader who's curious about female leaders. Nobody really pays attention to us.”

[Female leaders are considered rare]

“Of course. Like how they say corals are now endangered and rare but still continued to ignore it and leave it to die by pollution.”

[……]

The two spoke for a few more before exchanging formalities and ended the call. Belarus tap the phone on her chin and thought deeply.

Starshine is in trouble. Should she help or just mind her own

business? Although she's fond of the cute starshine, they weren't exactly close enough for her to meddle in her affair.

After contemplating for a few second, she shrugged and went back inside the club and searched for a tall Russian, locating him still drinking at the bar.

“Hey! Here's your phone!”

Belarus was about to give the phone back when she suddenly froze in place.

“Huh? Russy? Russia? A-are you crying?!”

What is this?! Who can make her brother cry like this?!

Belarus was in disbelief as she stared at the crying Russia while Kazakhstan had just came back after dancing and is sweating as if he showered.

“Hey! I was looking for you! Why are you— huh? A-are you crying?!”

Both Kazakhstan and Belarus stood besides Russia with an aghast expression as if they saw something unbelievable.

Russia wanted to cry out loud. But he can only stare blankly at the paper on his hand and silently shed tears.

The letter was given by sunshine... No, it should be philipia who gave him this letter on behalf of his sunshine. Because his sunshine is no longer here.

“Why did you leave without saying anything to me...” he muttered as he stared at the words written on the paper.

—Congratulations on graduating. Sorry if I wasn't there and sorry if Philipia left early. She's a shy girl and very awkward, I hope you can be patient and understand her. But she's also very kind, even kinder than I am. My kindness all came from her, and all of her gentleness mainly derived from her.

—Be glorious, our free Fatherland!

—Leaving a memory, Filipia.

Russia couldn't help but bend like a shrimp, hugging the letter close to his heart, smelling a faint scent of sampaguita from it. He can imagine her soft hands brushing on the surface, holding the pen and writing the words in a gracious manner.

Was she smiling? Was she happy? Was she okay? He wanted to know.

But how can he? When she's long gone.

Belarus was startled when he heard a soft whimper from her brother even through the loud music.

“Oh my gosh. My brother is crying.” she muttered in shock, slapping Kazakhstan on his arm.

Kazakhstan, on the other hand even began to doubt his eyes and stared at the empty bottle of beer in his hand.

Alright, that's enough drinking for one night...

———————

【 I'm sure Russia is crying from happiness 🍴□🍴 】

【 Almost forgot to mention— I will be posting two versions of 「Chapter 49」 because... well. You know. Some of you like the 🚫 part while some likes the 🧒👩👧👦 part. 】

【 Just giving you a heads up ⬆□ 】

Chapter 46 : Family Friendly

【 This is the **family friendly** 「Chapter 46」. It will contain incest, and small amount of smut, readers are advised to read at your own risk. Thank you for your understanding. (˘ ³˘)♥ 】

———————

When the call ended, China was blank for a second. He can't imagine it... He can't imagine what philipia must've felt during those times.

“Mongrel, she's awake!” Egypt called from inside the house. China immediately got up and ran inside towards the bedroom and saw that the lights were now on.

Philipia sat on the bed while Nepal treated the bruise on her right cheek.

“Philipia...” he softly muttered her name.

Philipia saw China and Egypt come in and couldn't help but feel nervous. She felt like she was exposed and that she was being judged for what happened to her.

Her eyes darted here and there, unable to look at them in the eyes, an obvious sign of discomfort.

Egypt noticed it and immediately soothed her with a coaxing voice, “There, there. It's okay. No need to be scared Anuket...”

Philipia shook her head, trying to tell Egypt that she wasn't Anuket. But as if her lips were sealed shut, she couldn't utter a word.

Thanks to the vial that Nepal made her sniff, she was now calm and less nervous—but she's still nervous.

Egypt gave her a warm smile, “I won't hurt you. I just want to check your body okay? I have an ID that can prove that I have medical license. Would you like to see it?”

Philipia still shook her head. Of course she knew he has medical license. If he doesn't, would the school turn a blind eye that he ‘secretly’ made a small garden filled with poisonous and dangerous plants?

Seeing her response, Egypt glanced at China helplessly. He does not want to scare Philipia or she might have another mental breakdown.

China was also clueless on what to do. Didn't he just scold him from being too rash and agitated? Why is he looking at him?

China, “……”

Egypt, “……”

Seeing the expression of the two. Nepal sighed tiredly. They are so unreliable when coaxing someone. One is like a strict teacher (China) while the other is like a perverted doctor (Egypt). Only Nepal is normal person in this room... Ah, perhaps maybe even Philipia?

Nepal then takes a vial, removes the lid and handed it over to her. Philipia stared unblinkingly at the vial that was different from the other one. She hesitated for a second before she cautiously takes it and sniff it.

Wait, why is she automatically sniffing this? What if it could make her sleep again? Why is her guard so down at the moment?

If Egypt could hear her inner thoughts, he would proudly declare that it was because of the vial that Nepal made her smell first. It was a special ointment that can make you feel relax and sleepy, making your nerves soft and your mind tranquil.

Fortunately, it was just a relaxing ointment this time that won't let her fall asleep but can make her relax even more as though her bones were made of jelly.

Nepal saw her relaxed expression and helped her lean back on the head of the bed with a pillow.

Egypt hesitated then asked, “Is it okay to check you now?”

Philipia was smelling the relaxing ointment and didn't feel nervous as she did, so she gave her consent and even took the initiative to hand her wrist.

What is this? Why is her reaction so cute?

Egypt coughed awkwardly before he looked at Nepal and nodded to himself, feeling proud of his own nurse.

Nurse Nepal: “……”

Egypt sat on the other side and took her pulse. “Hmm hmm. You're okay and there's no signs of danger in your health. In fact, you're even healthier...” he muttered the last part.

China felt relieved. Now he can finally breath easily and was no longer worrying incessantly.

China sat at the edge of the bed by her foot and couldn't help but ask the question that has been bothering him.

“Philipia... what happened?”

Egypt gave China a warning look while Nepal shot him another glare. Unlike the two, the victim was calm and unperturbed. Philipia stuttered on her words, she replied, “Nothing happened.”

Hearing her answer, it was like a heavy boulder was taken off of China's chest, giving him a sense of relief. He had never felt this afraid but also relieved at the same time in one day.

It was even worse than when he took over the leadership of his country for the first time. Although Egypt had told him nothing happened, he still couldn't help but worry, but now Philipia herself confirmed it—which made him experience a rollercoaster of emotion.

Seeing his relieved expression, Philipia couldn't help but look down and fiddle with the vial with a guilty conscience.

Nepal watch her action and closed his eyes. If he didn't see the redness on the inside of her thighs, as well as the bruises on her waist and hips, he would've really believed it.

Indeed, no penetration happened, it just happened in a completely different way.

Anger boiled inside his chest, making him feel stuffy and uncomfortable—but he couldn't do anything.

He was unworthy as her friend, he failed her, so he has no right to berate her.

He can only close his eyes, hold his hand forming a fist and take heavy deep breaths.

China sighed, “It's good... I was worried.”

Philipia pursed her lips as she looked at China and Egypt and couldn't help but recall what *really* happened.

...

When Martial closed the door with a soft click. Philipia felt something snap in her head, as if she was approaching her own death sentence.

Martial threw her on the bed, takes something from his pocket and fed it to Philipia from mouth-to-mouth.

It was a pill that easily melted once it came in contact with a person's warmth. The tablet only took a few seconds for it to react when Philipia felt like her whole body was doused in fire. She was sweating, panting, and trembling.

Martial withdraw the pressure on her body and slowly started to undress on top of her.

He took off his cap, which made his red and fiery hair stand out,

then his robe and shirt that shows his perfect pectoral muscle and abs. One really can't tell he was hiding such an explosive yet slender body beneath his formal clothes.

“You're so beautiful...” He said as he leaned down and caressing her cheek.

Philipia looked at him in indignation.

“Finally...” He whispered as he began to kiss her ear, going down to her neck.

“No... brother please. don't do this...please.” Philipia begged, golden tears continuously streaming down.

Martial stared at those golden tears with obsession in his eyes and couldn't help wiping them with his hand, staining his skin with a dazzling color of gold.

“This is the only difference between us Philipia. You can cry freely while I can't...” he said and began to invade her mouth. It was soft, moist, warm, and elastic. When it open and closes, it really makes his blood run hot.

Due to the weird drug Martial forcibly fed her. Even without the use of his skill and invisible chains locking her, she felt weak and unable to move much. Though, she can lift her arms and legs, but it had no energy behind it. No matter how much she struggled, Martial was still stronger and in control.

All of her cries and pleading were blocked by the rough and lustful kiss. “I love you...” he whispered, his lips and tongue still aggressively attacking. “I love you Philipia, I love you.” He repeated again and again, while his hand roaming and groping her body. Perhaps it was because he fed her with that drug by mouth, Martial was also influenced by the effect.

Although sweet words of confession were said, in Philipia's ears, it was nothing more than a reminder it wasn't normal, it wasn't something supposed to be said!

Suddenly, a burst of energy came and successfully pushed Martial

and gave him a hard slap. But that energy quickly disappeared as she fell back on the bed, panting.

Martial, on the other hand, laughed. His low and rough voice was chilling it made Philipia shudder.

“Good... struggle more. Because the more you fight back, the stronger the drug would take effect.” He said, licking his lips as if savoring the pain, “I made this drug with you in mind. I imagined what you would look like crying, moaning, and pleading in pleasure once you're underneath me. Do you like it?”

Martial spoke right next to her ear, giving her goosebumps that she did not want. He laughed before he inserted his hand between her legs, “Your body is more honest than you, Philipia.”

“Ah! stop! Stop! don't touch me! Brother...please! I'll give myself to you but not now! Please! You promised me didn't you?! You promised you'd give me time, a year! Just another year, please...stop! Don't touch me...please.”

Her pleading only made the fire burn brighter. But he still listened and replied, “I promised my other sister I'll give her time. But not you...”

“Kuya! Please!”

Martial froze and gave her a deep look.

“If y-you think about it. This is our first time seeing each other after a hundred years as... m-me. All throughout your life, you lived with Filipia and not me. Aren't I your real sister? Can't you give me a chance? Please... I'll give you myself and I won't struggle, I'll cooperate, I'll love you back too not as my brother but as you... Just, not now...” Philipia gritted her teeth, her body seething in shame and disgust. “I'm not ready Martial. Please... not now...”

More golden tears stained the bed.

Martial looked at her and muttered, “So her name was Filipia.” he leaned down and kissed her nose.

This time, Philipia didn't struggle. She allowed him to kiss her nose all the way down to her chin that was now bruised.

“Can I believe you?”

Philipia immediately struck the iron while it's still hot, “You can! I can make a promise! I'll exchange a leaders promise with you! Please...”

“Promise me? With what?”

Philipia looked at him straight in the eyes. Causing Martial to shiver in pleasure. “If I break that promise, I'll tie my life with you. Once you die, I'll die with you...”

Nothing is more heavier than a promise for a life. In this exchange, Martial benefited more than Philipia. But he did not immediately agree.

He looked at her closely before stating, “You must also promise not to lie to me.”

“I won't...”

Martial was finally satisfied. They exchanged a promise, but it felt more like a deal with the devil.

When it was over. Martial once again resumed his action, Philipia was about to struggle again when he reassured, “Shhh...I won't put it in. You don't expect me to just walk out of here like this will you? Especially you, if we don't do something about it, it'll become more painful for you.”

Seeing as she had no choice. She gave up and didn't struggle anymore.

【 Family Friendly 】

The whole process was a blur. Philipia felt both shame, disgust, and pleasure simultaneously. At least Martial was gentle. Yet he was still rough and made Philipia feel like she was being eaten alive.

She could hear his grunt, his heavy breathing, and his moaning by her ears, calling her names and even called her a few nicknames like '*baby*' and '*babe*'.

He even thought it would be interesting as they were about to reach a climax, he called her lovingly, sweetly, and gently, "Mahal..."

Philipia was both angry and ashamed, but also intrigued.

When she did it with Japan and Spain. She felt fear and pain more than pleasure. Perhaps that was why Filipia and Philipia had a bad impression when it comes to sex.

Yet with her own brother, the person whom she looked up to and even rely on, gave her more pleasure that almost made her mind turn blank and messed up.

Philipia was biting and clutching on the sheet as they both came. Martial panted and stared at his own evidence rolling from her thighs to the mattress. He held her waist and rubbed it ambiguously.

He press his chest on her sweaty back and gave her cheek a kiss. "Was it good?"

Philipia was still lingering from the aftereffects of passion and answered absent-mindedly. "Nn..."

Martial laughed in amusement as he stared at the mess he made. "Me too. It felt very good..."

Although Martial wanted to mess up her insides, he was still happy even with just the legs and thighs.

He moved her body and made her lay on her back, completely defenseless and expose in front of him. He stared at her deeply, feeling the fire that had just gone out, ignited again. He leaned down, bury his head in the crook of her neck and took a deep breath as though to calm him down.

The scent of mint and citrus invaded his nostrils. So this is what his sister smells like. Not unlike the other that smelled like sampaguita

all the time—in fact, he was never fond of sampaguita. He dislikes the smell of it, but because that was the smell of his sister that he desired, he made himself get used to it. But now that he found out they were two different people, he was happy and thought that they were really made for each other.

No wonder he didn't like the smell. The smell of sampaguita was never meant for him and it was never the smell of the original Philipia.

The current smell of Philipia was more of his liking... If only he could have her now. But It wasn't time yet. Once he can finally have her, he'll savor her, he'll make sure to taste every inch of her body.

“Haha...haha...” He laughed and giggled as dark thoughts occupied his mind.

He looked at her and Philipia kept her eyes open as hard as she could. “I love you... do you feel it, Philipia? I love you so much it makes me go crazy.”

Philipia pursed her lips and took the initiative to hug his head on her chest. It's pitiful. Two forsaken leaders only had each other in the midst of pain and slaughter. She can understand why he became like this...

She (Philipia) was his only pillar of support from going crazy. While he (Martial) was her only wall of reliability from going insane.

They were abandoned, left behind, and forgotten by the only relatives in their life. Yet they expect to be accepted, let them enter in their broken world once more.

“I feel it...” she said. “I feel it... Martial.”

Martial smiled and gave her another kiss. But it was a chastise type of kiss.

“Good... That's good.” he muttered. Before closing his eyes.

【 I told you he's a good boi ✊😔 】

【If you chose to read the family friend version. Congrats, you're still sane. 】

Chapter 46 : Explicit 🚫

【 This is the **Explicit** 「Chapter 46」. It will contain incest, mentions of 🦋 and 😼, as well as 🕳 and 🍒, details of 🔞, and a bowl of ✧ uncomfortableness✧ Readers are advised to read at your own risk. Thank you for your understanding. (˘ ³˘)♥ 】

———————

When the call ended, China was blank for a second. He can't imagine it... He can't imagine what philipia must've felt during those times.

“Mongrel, she's awake!” Egypt called from inside the house. China immediately got up and ran inside towards the bedroom and saw that the lights were now on.

Philipia sat on the bed while Nepal treated the bruise on her right cheek.

“Philipia...” he softly muttered her name.

Philipia saw China and Egypt come in and couldn't help but feel nervous. She felt like she was exposed and that she was being judged for what happened to her.

Her eyes darted here and there, unable to look at them in the eyes, an obvious sign of discomfort.

Egypt noticed it and immediately soothed her with a coaxing voice, “There, there. It's okay. No need to be scared Anuket...”

Philipia shook her head, trying to tell Egypt that she wasn't Anuket. But as if her lips were sealed shut, she couldn't utter a word.

Thanks to the vial that Nepal made her sniff, she was now calm and less nervous—but she's still nervous.

Egypt gave her a warm smile, “I won't hurt you. I just want to check

your body okay? I have an ID that can prove that I have medical license. Would you like to see it?”

Philipia still shook her head. Of course she knew he has medical license. If he doesn't, would the school turn a blind eye that he ‘secretly’ made a small garden filled with poisonous and dangerous plants?

Seeing her response, Egypt glanced at China helplessly. He does not want to scare Philipia or she might have another mental breakdown.

China was also clueless on what to do. Didn't he just scold him from being too rash and agitated? Why is he looking at him?

China, “……”

Egypt, “……”

Seeing the expression of the two. Nepal sighed tiredly. They are so unreliable when coaxing someone. One is like a strict teacher (China) while the other is like a perverted doctor (Egypt). Only Nepal is normal person in this room... Ah, perhaps maybe even Philipia?

Nepal then takes a vial, removes the lid and handed it over to her. Philipia stared unblinkingly at the vial that was different from the other one. She hesitated for a second before she cautiously takes it and sniff it.

Wait, why is she automatically sniffing this? What if it could make her sleep again? Why is her guard so down at the moment?

If Egypt could hear her inner thoughts, he would proudly declare that it was because of the vial that Nepal made her smell first. It was a special ointment that can make you feel relax and sleepy, making your nerves soft and your mind tranquil.

Fortunately, it was just a relaxing ointment this time that won't let her fall asleep but can make her relax even more as though her bones were made of jelly.

Nepal saw her relaxed expression and helped her lean back on the head of the bed with a pillow.

Egypt hesitated then asked, “Is it okay to check you now?”

Philipia was smelling the relaxing ointment and didn't feel nervous as she did, so she gave her consent and even took the initiative to hand her wrist.

What is this? Why is her reaction so cute?

Egypt coughed awkwardly before he looked at Nepal and nodded to himself, feeling proud of his own nurse.

Nurse Nepal: “……”

Egypt sat on the other side and took her pulse. “Hmm hmm. You're okay and there's no signs of danger in your health. In fact, you're even healthier...” he muttered the last part.

China felt relieved. Now he can finally breath easily and was no longer worrying incessantly.

China sat at the edge of the bed by her foot and couldn't help but ask the question that has been bothering him.

“Philipia... what happened?”

Egypt gave China a warning look while Nepal shot him another glare. Unlike the two, the victim was calm and unperturbed. Philipia stuttered on her words, she replied, “Nothing happened.”

Hearing her answer, it was like a heavy boulder was taken off of China's chest, giving him a sense of relief. He had never felt this afraid but also relieved at the same time in one day.

It was even worse than when he took over the leadership of his country for the first time. Although Egypt had told him nothing happened, he still couldn't help but worry, but now Philipia herself confirmed it—which made him experience a rollercoaster of emotion.

Seeing his relieved expression, Philipia couldn't help but look down and fiddle with the vial with a guilty conscience.

Nepal watch her action and closed his eyes. If he didn't see the redness on the inside of her thighs, as well as the bruises on her waist and hips, he would've really believed it.

Indeed, no penetration happened, it just happened in a completely different way.

Anger boiled inside his chest, making him feel stuffy and uncomfortable—but he couldn't do anything.

He was unworthy as her friend, he failed her, so he has no right to berate her.

He can only close his eyes, hold his hand forming a fist and take heavy deep breaths.

China sighed, “It's good... I was worried.”

Philipia pursed her lips as she looked at China and Egypt and couldn't help but recall what *really* happened.

...

When Martial closed the door with a soft click. Philipia felt something snap in her head, as if she was approaching her own death sentence.

Martial threw her on the bed, takes something from his pocket and fed it to Philipia from mouth-to-mouth.

It was a pill that easily melted once it came in contact with a person's warmth. The tablet only took a few seconds for it to react when Philipia felt like her whole body was doused in fire. She was sweating, panting, and trembling.

Martial withdraw the pressure on her body and slowly started to undress on top of her.

He took off his cap, which made his red and fiery hair stand out,

then his robe and shirt that shows his perfect pectoral muscle and abs. One really can't tell he was hiding such an explosive yet slender body beneath his formal clothes.

“You're so beautiful...” He said as he leaned down and caressing her cheek.

Philipia looked at him in indignation.

“Finally...” He whispered as he began to kiss her ear, going down to her neck.

“No... brother please. don't do this...please.” Philipia begged, golden tears continuously streaming down.

Martial stared at those golden tears with obsession in his eyes and couldn't help wiping them with his hand, staining his skin with a dazzling color of gold.

“This is the only difference between us Philipia. You can cry freely while I can't...” he said and began to invade her mouth. It was soft, moist, warm, and elastic. When it open and closes, it really makes his blood run hot.

Due to the weird drug Martial forcibly fed her. Even without the use of his skill and invisible chains locking her, she felt weak and unable to move much. Though, she can lift her arms and legs, but it had no energy behind it. No matter how much she struggled, Martial was still stronger and in control.

All of her cries and pleading were blocked by the rough and lustful kiss. “I love you...” he whispered, his lips and tongue still aggressively attacking. “I love you Philipia, I love you.” He repeated again and again, while his hand roaming and groping her body. Perhaps it was because he fed her with that drug by mouth, Martial was also influenced by the effect.

Although sweet words of confession were said, in Philipia's ears, it was nothing more than a reminder it wasn't normal, it wasn't something supposed to be said!

Suddenly, a burst of energy came and successfully pushed Martial

and gave him a hard slap. But that energy quickly disappeared as she fell back on the bed, panting.

Martial, on the other hand, laughed. His low and rough voice was chilling it made Philipia shudder.

“Good... struggle more. Because the more you fight back, the stronger the drug would take effect.” He said, licking his lips as if savoring the pain, “I made this drug with you in mind. I imagined what you would look like crying, moaning, and pleading in pleasure once you're underneath me. Do you like it?”

Martial spoke right next to her ear, giving her goosebumps that she did not want. He laughed before he inserted his hand between her legs, “Your body is more honest than you, Philipia.”

“Ah! stop! Stop! don't touch me! Brother...please! I'll give myself to you but not now! Please! You promised me didn't you?! You promised you'd give me time, a year! Just another year, please...stop! Don't touch me...please.”

Her pleading only made the fire burn brighter. But he still listened and replied, “I promised my other sister I'll give her time. But not you...”

“Kuya! Please!”

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“If y-you think about it. This is our first time seeing each other after a hundred years as... m-me. All throughout your life, you lived with Filipia and not me. Aren't I your real sister? Can't you give me a chance? Please... I'll give you myself and I won't struggle, I'll cooperate, I'll love you back too not as my brother but as you... Just, not now...” Philipia gritted her teeth, her body seething in shame and disgust. “I'm not ready Martial. Please... not now...”

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Nothing is more heavier than a promise for a life. In this exchange, Martial benefited more than Philipia. But he did not immediately agree.

He looked at her closely before stating, “You must also promise not to lie to me.”

“I won't...”

Martial was finally satisfied. They exchanged a promise, but it felt more like a deal with the devil.

When it was over. Martial once again resumed his action, Philipia was about to struggle again when he reassured, “Shhh...I won't put it in. You don't expect me to just walk out of here like this will you? Especially you, if we don't do something about it, it'll become more painful for you.”

Seeing as she had no choice. She gave up and didn't struggle anymore.

【 Explicit area ⚠ 】

Martial saw her defeated look which only turned him on even more. He traced his fingers on her face before leaning down.

A hot, wet tongue travelled her neck and nibbled on her earlobe. He

then gently touched her lips, as if not satisfied with just touching and licking. His tongue then slid in her mouth, sucking and drowning her. The sound of their kisses were loud it resounded in the room that Philipia became embarrassed.

Martial made a low groan then paused before pushing even further inside her mouth. Philipia was then released and the kisses trailed down to her collarbone. A foreign sensation ran throughout her body, making her whimper in a shaky breath.

After kissing the collarbone, the tongue slides downwards to her chest and a tongue landed on her nipple, licking it. Martial noticed Philipia biting her lower lip and trembling slightly, before sucking harder while his other hand was playing with the other, pampered by his long, and calloused fingers. They were twisted, pinched, followed by a tingling sensation. It was so strange but it was also pleasurable.

Martial finally released her nipple and continued on his way down to her stomach and abdomen.

“Nn....” Philipia wanted to stop herself from making such a sounf, but as if her body didn't listen to her, she gasped and bit her lower lip. Unknowingly, it seduced Martial whose eyes never strayed from her face.

Philipia tried to twist her body away from him, but the movement of her arms and legs were still weak from the drug.

Martial lightly licked the clit, the tongue danced around as if playing and teasing it. Philipia was new to the sensation and couldn't help but jolt from the sudden wave of pleasure, making her feel scared with a bit of anticipation. Seeing such a reaction encouraged Martial even more, even using his fingers to rub up and down, spreading the natural lube, coaxing even more fluid out.

Philipia was stimulated and felt ashamed that she thought it wasn't enough and wanted more. She felt like her body was burning making her tear up at the same time. Philipia felt like she was about to die from the sensation that she never felt before. It was so good and so extreme that she was terrified and excited.

Finally, when Martial moved his finger on a specific angle and hit something, a loud moan escaped Philipia's mouth, arousing Martial even more.

His tongue that was mimicking intercourse filled the room with lewd sounds as Philipia's fingers curled and uncurled on the bed sheet, trying to squeeze Martial with her legs.

“Ah…no…ah...”

Martial's tongue withdrew from her, before he spread her legs and stared at the pink hole that was now red, flushed and swelling. He swallowed really hard, stopping himself from just ramming in and fucking her to death.

He placed his fingers and rubbed that part where it made Philipia jolt and moan as she looked at him with moist and teary eyes, mixed with dry and wet gold. It was so beautiful he almost forgot to breath.

Because he was so focused on her, he didn't realize he fingered her too fast that made Philipia orgasm. Her body trembled as she let out a deep and sensual moan.

Martial was surprised by how fast she came that it made him smile. He let out a throaty laughter before he gave her another kiss on the lips.

“Good?”

Philipia was breathing heavily but nodded in response. Her mouth was open and saliva was escaping from the side.

As if he hadn't had enough, he fingered her again, causing Philipia to hold his arm and moan. She couldn't handle the stimulation and felt weak all over as Martial's fingers were filled with glistening and lascivious liquid.

As she felt like reaching orgasm again, Martial stopped, took her hand and placed it on something hard, throbbing, swelling, causing Philipia to blush in shame as it is the first time she touched something like this. Especially if it was from her brother.

She tried to retract her hand before Martial grabbed it again, sliding her hand over. “Its hot isn't it?”

Philipia's face burned so much from shame she faced the other way with her eyes close shut.

She could feel the slightly throbbing shaft on her hand. Martial was dissatisfied with just being held when he suddenly climb on top of her and brought it to her mouth. “Open your mouth and take it in.”

Philipia resisted, her mouth clenched tightly.

“Fine, I can just fuck you here. Nothing will happen to me even if I break the promise we just made...”

Hearing that reminder, Philipia forcibly faced him again.

“Open your eyes and look at me. Look at the man who lusted over you, Philipia...”

Philipia struggled to open her eyes and was so ashamed by what she saw.

“Your reactions are cute. If it was Filipia, she would think it's only normal and wouldn't react much, but you... you're so conscious that it makes me just want to fuck you right here...”

Philipia's ears burned from the obscene and vulgar words he said. And after struggling for a few seconds, she sticks out her tongue first before opening her mouth.

“Good girl...”

Martial slowly pushed it in her mouth, sighing as he felt the wet and hot sensation wrapping around his cock. “Hmm...”

Philipia tried to accommodate the size in her mouth when she heard a muffled growl, “That's it baby... a little slower... move your tongue more.”

Philipia followed Martial's instructions and didn't even realize how her expression turned from struggling to pleasure, as if she was

really eating something delicious. Martial almost cummed in her mouth and face but still held himself back.

Does she even know what she looked like right now?

Suddenly, he pushed a bit deeper, Philipia choked and felt like throwing up. Then, there came the sound of a '*pop*' when Philipia separated from his cock whilst a string of saliva still connected from her lips to the tip. “It's too big... I can't take it.” she said, panting and spraying hot breath.

Philipia doesn't know how seductive she looks right now that it caused Martial to grow even bigger.

It wasn't enough, he wanted more.

He got off and placed his hands between her legs again. Philipia still hadn't gotten over her first orgasm before she was being fingered again. Her already sensitive body became even more sensitive she started shaking with each movement of his finger.

The pleasure was uncontrollable and hits that spot everytime that her moaning became inconsistent.

“Feels good? Does it feel good? Do you want to be fucked?”

Due to the pleasure drowning her, Philipia was unable to comprehend what he said, simply replying with a ‘Yes’, ‘more’, and ‘Don't stop.’

Martial was so aroused his eyes glowed, making them both release their marks which would increase their senses. The overly pleasurable fingering became ten times even more pleasurable. Philipia moaned loudly, unconsciously hugging Martial and even digging her nails on his back, giving him light scratches. But he didn't mind, in fact, he wanted her to feel him more, he wanted her to mark him in her own way.

Instead of pain, he felt so turned on his breathing became rapid. He roughly and aggressively kissed her, their tongues dancing and twirling around, creating a lewd smacking sound. When Martial stopped, Philipia didn't. He watched and enjoyed as Philipia kisses

him herself, even to the point of cupping his cheek and kissing him even more deeply while moaning.

“Haha... you're so aroused you don't even know what you're doing...” He said, trailing his kisses to her neck, biting it and sucking on it as if he hadn't had enough.

Suddenly, her legs folded and trembled. He knew she was about to orgasm again so he took his fingers and quickly changed her position into laying on all four. He lifted her waist, trailed his hand on her spine and stopped just above her clit and positioned himself by the entrance.

Philipia felt a hot object pressing over her hole. Because she was still aroused, she did not think to stop him and even thought that he was too slow to enter. It felt throbbing and itchy in her inside she wanted something to fill her up. The hot object was pressing, sliding and rubbing her that she wiggled her waist and moaned, “Don't go... nn..” Her mind was still so dizzy she didn't even know what was happening.

Martial kissed her earlobe and whispered, “It was you yourself who told me it's not time yet, you're not ready yet. So I won't put it in like I promised.” his hand then groped and massaged both of her chest, while his fingers pinching and flicking her nipple, “This is what you get for stopping me, philipia...”

Taint her...

Tear her...

Their bodies were covered in sweat, and the temperature of their bodies was extremely hot. “I'll make you feel good soon...” those words were almost trembling from impatience.

Suddenly, Philipia shouted in a low voice. “Ah!” her face immediately turned beet red, her fingers clutching on the bedding tightly, her mouth shut as she didn't want to pant or moan anymore.

Why can't she stop herself? Why can't she hold back?

Philipia finally had a vague understanding of it now when she felt Martial lightly scraping her clit.

“I want to do you, want to go in, want to fuck you... why can't you understand hmm?” he licked her earlobes, making her arch her back as a tingling sensation spread. “Haha... you're sticking so close, you want to have sex with me that bad?”

Hot breath sprayed on her ears, Martial's strong arms were propped on her side, one was holding her waist while the other playing with her chest as his lower body moved forward incessantly. His throat gave out a low and heavy gasp. Martial then patted her buttocks and said, “Keep your legs together baby. Make sure to keep it tight.”

Philipia did what he said, at a loss on what he was about to do. She was confused and was about to turn around when she felt, between her hips and legs, he squeezed a very hot and very thick weapon, which stimulated her to gasp in her throat and her scalp numbed.

The round head secreted shiny liquid as it inserted between her legs. Heat was wrapped up around the insides of her soft thighs. Martial let out a sigh of pleasure, held Philipia's waist, and mimicked the action of a genuine sexual intercourse, pulling it in and out.

“Ah…That's good. Don't you feel so good baby?”

So this is what he meant by ‘*not put it in*.’ Philipia thought, as she moaned and panted. The thick head rubbed between her hips and legs, even rubbing her clit repeatedly. Her own fluid, as well as Martial's, were used as a lube, it stirred up fiercely and vividly, rubbed between incessantly.

Her waist turned soft, her spine was crisp and bent, and her eyes were covered with a layer of mist. She felt confused and could not feel anything except the strong stimulation and pleasure.

She gasp silently, her cheeks were flushed red, and the hue blue hair scattered on the pillows and mattress.

Martial felt himself rubbing on her hole and was tempted several times to just ram inside. Although he was irritated and angry by stopping himself, he still kept his promise and instead, showed his dissatisfaction by slapping her buttocks and pounding and thrusting completely into her, into the woman he desired for more than a hundred years.

Philipia was pounded repeatedly, urged by the terrible stimulation of the thrust as her desire would rise in an increasingly urgent agitation.

The man behind her, hit her hips, fierce and hot, crazy and hungry. It made her shiver but she still obediently close her legs even more, feeling the hot thing rubbing on that spot, letting a few deep moans out. She didn't even realize she was moving with him. Cooperating with his movement rhythmically.

The bed creaked loudly, the sound of skin to skin smacking growing louder and faster, liquid and fluids creating a squelching sound. It was so hard, so fast, so crazy, and so lewd. Both parties were moaning as the pleasure and stimulation kept growing.

“Ahh... Philipia... Hold..nn..”

Martial's appeal was low and exotic. It was full of lust and passion.

“That's it....ah, more tightly...fuck!”

The desire could almost burn her. It was getting agitated and higher. Her mind was growing dim, the beast and desire gradually engulfed her by Martial, who had been leading this blasphemous and sinful sex.

Martial snuggled against her neck, hugging her from behind very tight that made Philipia unable to move and is at the mercy of the man behind her. Because of the pleasure building up, she did not realize that her neck started bleeding from his hard and aggressive bite because his lower body still continued to pound and thrust into her. Turning her mind into a mush as she started seeing dots of light.

“Fuck... so hot... Nhn baby... it feels good...So good.” he then fixed her hair to the side, exposing her flushed ears, giving it a bite and a lick. “What should I call you...” his voice was shaking due to the fast pounding by his lower body. “Do you like it? Being called baby? Or maybe something else... ah... Haa...”

Suddenly, he pushed her down while her waist and hips were still lifted and being pounded, he grab her hand and use it to pull her back, making him go faster and faster that it made the bed shake even more aggressively. “What do you like Philipia... what name should I call you?”

Philipia could only moan incoherently. Her voice was soft and small that it aroused the beast in him.

“ah... fuck... good. Let's call you babe, how about it?”

For some reason, her heart skipped and it made her aroused, letting out more fluids. Martial felt it as it made the hot cock even more wet and slimy. “Like that? Huh? Haha... I knew you like me...”

He leaned down, looking at Philipia hungrily and thirstily. He lifted her chin to the side and kissed her lips, their tongues tangled with each other, which was sticky and moist.

The impact of his lower body was still continuously pounding strong that it gave Philipia the illusion that she was being penetrated.

“Ah... more... more...” he moaned when suddenly, an idea came to Martial. He smiled mischievously while playing with her nipples, he whispered with hot breath filled with desire, “More mahal... more... let me fuck you more... it feels hot, it feels so good...so good...” in the end, he gave a throaty and sexy laughter.

He let her go and let her clench on the bed as he laughed crazily, “Like it? Like how I imitated that way america spoke? Like it baby? Do you like it?”

Philipia couldn't say anything and can only feel ashamed and guilty.

He grab a hold of both of her wrist behind her back while the other

pressed on her neck as he pounded even more aggressively, almost sliding his cock inside.

Ah, if only he can fuck her inside...

The bed shook even more brutally and wildly. The pillows and mattress were completely thrown and messed up. Some were stained with tears and unknown liquid and mixed with dry gold.

“Philipia... Little sis...”

He was panting, calling, and lusting for her.

“Baby...”

Martial held her waist hard, groping and rubbing. His eyes were almost beastly to the point of insanity. His rushing chest and breathing were attached to Philipia's sweaty back, as his lower body grew faster and faster, till his reasons destroyed him.

“Martial... ah!” Philipia suddenly moaned his name.

Martial gasped and kissed her neck, responding, “Don't worry... I'm here... just feel every inch of me... Just think of me, keep thinking of me...”

Martial could hardly stop himself. The round head of his cock was rubbing fiercely at the entrance, almost surrounded by the warm and hot hole. “Fuck...” he cursed and thrusted even faster, he felt a slight sensation on his spine and abdomen, making him thrust faster and faster that his breathing became rapid and Philipia's moaning was hitching. When he felt like cumming, he immediately pulled out and pressed the head on the entrance.

He growled as he shot a stream of semen onto the opening of the hole, flowing to the inside of her thigh, and to the mattress.

Philipia also climaxed, she shivered and made a throaty moan. Her back arched as she pressed and rubbed against Martial's cock. Almost sliding inside as her own fluid kept coming out and lubricating him.

Martial watched Philipia's action and almost lost his reason before he took a deep breath and held her waist instead.

He leaned on her back, kisses her neck and put his finger on her clit again.

Philipia was still cumming when she was being fingered, spreading her sticky and thick fluid around her entrance. “Ah! Stop...I just...nn!”

“Came? You just came? Philipia, you're just begging to be fucked. But let me do you with my fingers for now, alright?” in the burning eyes of Martial, he muttered obsessively, “Even if it's just my fingers...”

Shame overwhelmed Philipia which made her flush her cheeks before she felt a finger being inserted inside her. “Ah! ah... ah!”

She gasped. An electrifying pleasure engulfing her, which was different from the mere rubbing.

She must've gone crazy for her to think that, if he really was inside, the pleasure should've been even more intense.

“I should've been in here, fucking you in here... alas, what a pity.”

Martial fingered her again, this time, it was penetrating her inside. First, it was one finger, then two, then three, and it continued to increase till she was stretched and ready to be eaten. Of course, Martial resisted to just do her. But he felt that waiting and then fucking her afterwards would be so much more worth it and pleasurable.

He can wait, he can still wait...

Philipia was unable to bare the stimulation and soon came again. She was completely helpless, weak, and tired. She couldn't stand such pressure and indulgence that her brain seemed to have stopped working. She felt very sleepy.

The whole process was a blur. Philipia felt both shame, disgust, and pleasure simultaneously. At least Martial was gentle. Yet he was

still rough and made Philipia feel like she was being eaten alive.

She could hear his grunt, his heavy breathing, and his moaning by her ears, calling her names and even called her a few nicknames like '*baby*' and '*babe*'.

He even thought it would be interesting as they were about to reach a climax, he called her lovingly, sweetly, and gently, "Mahal..."

Philipia was both angry and ashamed, but also intrigued.

When she did it with Japan and Spain. She felt fear and pain more than pleasure. Perhaps that was why Filipia and Philipia had a bad impression when it comes to sex.

Yet with her own brother, the person whom she looked up to and even rely on, gave her more pleasure that almost made her mind turn blank and messed up.

Philipia was biting and clutching on the sheet as they both came. Martial panted and stared at his own evidence rolling from her thighs to the mattress. He held her waist and rubbed it ambiguously.

He press his chest on her sweaty back and gave her cheek a kiss. "Was it good?"

Philipia was still lingering from the aftereffects of passion and answered absent-mindedly. "Nn..."

Martial laughed in amusement as he stared at the mess he made. "Me too. It felt very good..."

Although Martial wanted to mess up her insides, he was still happy even with just the legs and thighs.

He moved her body and made her lay on her back, completely defenseless and expose in front of him. He stared at her deeply, feeling the fire that had just gone out, ignited again. He leaned down, bury his head in the crook of her neck and took a deep breath as though to calm him down.

The scent of mint and citrus invaded his nostrils. So this is what his sister smells like. Not unlike the other that smelled like sampaguita all the time—in fact, he was never fond of sampaguita. He dislikes the smell of it, but because that was the smell of his sister that he desired, he made himself get used to it. But now that he found out they were two different people, he was happy and thought that they were really made for each other.

No wonder he didn't like the smell. The smell of sampaguita was never meant for him and it was never the smell of the original Philipia.

The current smell of Philipia was more of his liking... If only he could have her now. But it wasn't time yet. Once he can finally have her, he'll savor her, he'll make sure to taste every inch of her body.

“Haha...haha...” He laughed and giggled as dark thoughts occupied his mind.

He looked at her and Philipia kept her eyes open as hard as she could. “I love you... do you feel it, Philipia? I love you so much it makes me go crazy.”

Philipia pursed her lips and took the initiative to hug his head on her chest. It's pitiful. Two forsaken leaders only had each other in the midst of pain and slaughter. She can understand why he became like this...

She (Philipia) was his only pillar of support from going crazy. While he (Martial) was her only wall of reliability from going insane.

They were abandoned, left behind, and forgotten by the only relatives in their life. Yet they expect to be accepted, let them enter in their broken world once more.

“I feel it...” she said. “I feel it... Martial.”

Martial smiled and gave her another kiss. But it was a chastise type of kiss.

“Good... That's good.” he muttered. Before closing his eyes.

———————

【 Hello? Yes, I want to report a reader who actually read and chose the **Explicit** version. →_→ 】

【 Ayooo, don't complain and all that, I was even kind enough to give you a **Family friendly** version. You reap what you sow, why'd you come here anyways? (●´⌓'●) 】

Chapter 47 : Rose, Him, Home

Philipia was too tired to open her eyes and soon fell asleep. Looking at her peaceful and sleeping face, Martial stared at her and played with a strand of her hair for a bit.

He smirked and laughed. Recalling what just happened, he couldn't help but glance at her legs that had become swollen and reddish then to her eyes that had become puffy.

He swallowed hard, leaned down and gave her forehead a kiss. The brother within him was frantically apologizing while the lustful one was ecstatic. He was now one step closer to being able to have her by himself.

Suddenly, Martial stood up, went to the bathroom and threw up in the sink. He panted heavily for a while before he washed his mouth and face and stared at the man reflected in the mirror.

Was this what she saw?

Martial raised a fist and was about to punch the mirror but stopped. His fist just an inch away from the surface, visibly trembling, stopping himself from making a mess.

“I should be happy,” he murmured.

【 You monster 】

“I should be satisfied.”

【 You rapist 】

“But why... Martial?”

Eye to eye with himself through the mirror, he was expressionless yet the reflection was looking back with a smile that you couldn't understand.

【 HAHAHAHAHA! Did you enjoy it? Did you love it? Fucking your own sister? 】

“I did... I really wanted her—But it's so wrong.”

【 It's wrong but you loved it. It's not right yet you kept thrusting between her legs like a beast! HAHAHAHA! Forcing her, giving her no choice. I bet you enjoyed every minute of it.】

“She consented. She didn't struggle afterwards when we made the deal.”

The Martial in the reflection sneered, 【 Even if she didn't struggle and made that deal, you still would've fucked her. 】

Martial nodded blankly, “Right. I still would've fucked her. But she doesn't deserve it...”

【 She does. She deserves it. Haven't you been lusting over her for a hundred years? 】

Martial covered his ears and shook his head, “She does not! She does not!”

【 HAHAHAHA! MARTIAL! MARTIAL! MARTIAL! YOU COVETED YOUR SISTER! 】

Martial's back touched the tiled walls, leaned against it and slid down. The reflection still stood, banging against the mirror from the other side. As if the mirror would break any second now.

【 You love her. She's yours. No one can take her from you. From the beginning till the end. She was yours. Why are you feeling guilty now? When the deed has been done? She's now fully aware of your feelings, fully aware of your motives, she knew what you truly are—A monster, a rapist, an incestuous bastard... 】

The reflection's voice somehow changed into Philipia's at the last part. Martial flinched and trembled in guilt.

“If only she wasn't my sister,” he muttered. “If only you weren't my sister...”

【 HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!! 】

“If only...” he looked at his hand that was trembling and towards the bed in the bedroom. Philipia still lay unconscious. The soft mattress made her sink.

Martial ignored the laughter from his reflection, slowly made his way to the side of the bed and brushed the strand of hair resting on her cheek.

“Will you still forgive me if you knew the truth?”

“Will you still... look at me the same way?” he paused as if realizing something. Martial gave a weak laugh tiredly. “Oh right, you already knew my true nature.”

He kneeled down and nuzzled his face on the crooked neck of her neck. The scent of citrus and mint invaded his nostrils.

His body released his marks which Philipia—who was still sleeping—reacted. Her marks and his marks glowed in the dimly lit room. The golden, blue, green, and white hue colors were mixing, creating a sense of heavenly and peaceful feeling in the room.

He took a deep breath and hummed a tone while brushing Philipia's hair. He opened his mouth and sang in a quiet, tired, and sad voice.

“O, light, in the dark night… You’re like a star in the sky. O, light, in the quiet night. Your picture, my beloved, makes one hurt…”

“Awake, and arise from slumber, from your sleep so deep.” He raised his head, placed his forehead against Philipia.

“Open your window… and look out to me”

He opened his glowing mismatched eyes, looking straight at Philipia. Up close, he can see, a little bit of light was escaping under her closed eyes and eyelashes.

He took a deep breath and sang the last part.

“So that you may understand... my true lament.”

Just outside the house. Someone was standing under a tree, looking at the small and lonely house that is so far apart from the neighborhood. They blended with the dark night with their dark clothes, holding a phone with their left and something round with their right.

While Martial was lulling a lullaby. That person was also lulling the same lullaby at the same time.

*

China sat in the living room with Egypt, discussing on what to do next while Nepal stayed in the bedroom. He changed the sheet of the bed and cleaned up the room a bit before knocking on the bathroom door. “Philipia?”

Philipia soaked in the warm bathtub, hugging her knees and burying her face in it. Her hue blue hair floating on the water. “Yes...” she replied.

“Do you need help?”

“No, I'm good. Thank you for all the hard work, Nepal.”

Nepal can tell Philipia was creating a distance between them. He pursed his lips and said, “You're welcome. If you need any help—”

“This is all the help that I need. Thank you.”

Nepal nodded and left the bedroom.

Philipia sighed and leaned back on the tub. She didn't want to owe anyone she isn't close with, nor does she want to see them. Her lie was seen through after seeing all the marks all over her body. Even so, they were nice enough not to expose her, but it was this action that made her feel like she's being mocked. Philipia felt so embarrassed.

Obviously ‘something’ did happen. Although there was no penetration, it still happened.

Philipia splashed her face with the warm water, trying not to think

about the tryst. They were brother's and sister's. Something that shouldn't happen, happened. Even with or without the deal she made, she should've fought back. But what's the point? It happened and one cannot cry over spilled milk.

As Philipia was trying to distract her thoughts, the marks on her body suddenly healed, disappearing, leaving only the scar of self-harm on her forearm.

“Huh?”

She looked at her unblemished skin as if those embarrassing hickies never existed. “Was it delayed or something? Why didn't it heal much sooner?” her tone was almost like a complaint. If it healed sooner she wouldn't be so hesitant to leave the bathroom nor would she feel so ashamed in facing them right now.

Outside, Nepal closed the door behind him and took a seat beside Egypt who was writing a prescription on the coffee table while China was using the broken and glitching phone.

“Just in case, I'll give Anuket some narcotics.” Egypt mumbled under his breath, looking like a serious school boy doing his homework.

“Why?” Nepal asked.

“Why? To reduce her nervousness.” Egypt answered as a matter-of-fact.

On the other side of the couch, China found several videos in the gallery, all of which were glitching and had an error on them. He frowned as he looked for a video that could still be played. When he got to the end, he found a video that was just taken yesterday. The date wasn't glitching and had a name under it.

【South Korea. 3:50 pm. XX/XX/20XX】

China furrowed his brow before tapping on the video and playing it.

The video started in a dark alley. Like a first perspective video, it

walked out of the dark alley and showed Center Park in Pangaea. It wasn't far from the academy. The video taker was calm, they held the camera in a steady hand and walked around the park. Then it walked towards the mini-forest of the park before they stopped. The camera shook a little before zooming in on a person sitting not far away.

It must've been in the afternoon when the video was taken, the park was still filled with people. Not far away, on a bench, two people were sitting— to be precise, two leaders. Philipia, wearing a different mask, and South Korea sitting besides her. South Korea was smiling the whole time as he spoke with Philipia.

There then came heavy breathing from the video taker, as if the person was on the verge of crying.

The camera started to shake then the video ended.

Unknowingly, Egypt and Nepal were now standing behind China, also watching the video and having the same solemn expression.

“A stalker?” Egypt guessed.

China also thought at first, but it felt wrong to call it stalking. The video taker at first seemed to be taking a casual video of their surroundings. It was as if they had no particular destination.

Nepal replied, “It's not stalking.”

Egypt scoffed. “I have had stalkers my entire life and I know a stalker when I see one.”

“You didn't see their face.”

“Obviously. Stalkers wouldn't expose themselves, unlike Germany.” he murmured the last part.

China searched for another video but that was the only video that could be viewed. He switched to the albums and saw multiple errors and black pictures. All of which were glitching.

“Someone really has to change their phone.” Egypt commented,

then paused. “Mongrel China, you're so obsessed with this phone, could it be you can't afford one anymore?”

“……”

China remained silent, but for Egypt, his silence means ‘yes’ but is too ashamed to admit it. He touched his heart and sighed helplessly, “As a generous pharaoh, I will buy you the best phone the world has to offer. A leader without a phone in this generation is like a caveman wearing modern clothes.”

China ignored Egypt who was still rambling behind him.

On the other side, the bedroom. Philipia had just finished bathing and saw that the time was already 2 in the morning. Not only did she not have a good sleep, she also hadn't had her dinner. Oh wait, it should be breakfast now.

Philipia wore the clothes Nepal chose. A shirt, sweat pants, and a hoodie. She heard the quiet conversation outside her bedroom and contemplated whether she should act normal or just hide under the covers of her bed and never appear again.

Cautiously and ever so quietly, Philipia turned the knob and opened the door just enough for her to peek as well as hide and shut the door immediately.

But no matter how small and quiet her action was, the three still noticed and simultaneously turned their heads.

Philipia instantly shuts the door. The sound of someone fumbling to lock the knob was particularly obvious.

The three of them glanced at each other. Egypt stood up and carefully made three knocks. “Hello?”

“Yes...” Philipia replied.

Egypt smiled. “Are you feeling okay now? Do you want to drink water? Eat dinner or maybe continue sleeping?”

On the other side of the door, Philipia pursed her lips then replied,

“I want to continue sleeping...” then she added hesitantly, “Please”.

Egypt smiled and signaled with his eyes to Nepal and China on the sofa. China nodded. “Philipia, if you need help don't hesitate to call me or any of us.”

Philipia can feel his sincere feelings. She felt grateful and appreciated everything they've done. Philipia nodded but realized they couldn't see her so she made a soft grunt.

China sighed. China stood up and walked towards the door, Egypt followed after giving a few instructions to Philipia. Nepal stared at the closed door for a moment before following the two.

Once Philipia heard the sound of the closed door, she peeked outside. Only when she saw that her house was once again empty was it only when she relaxed her guard and softened her posture. Although there were only three people in her house, it felt like she was with a crowd and wasn't used to having so many guest.

Philipia walked out and saw the paper and a few bottles of medicine left by Egypt and felt apprehensive. She couldn't understand before but now she does. These three men have feelings for Filipia. Except for Egypt, she felt his admiration rather than love.

Seeing that it was almost 3 am. Philipia no longer felt like eating. A lot has happened and she was too tired to do anything. Philipia turned to her heel and was about to go back to her room when she saw the phone that China was obsessing about earlier. The screen was flashing, reminding me that there's a message.

Philipia sat on the same spot China sat and took the phone.

Did China forget to bring it to him? Didn't he say he wanted to take it with him to study it?

Philipia examines the phone. The back and the screen was filled with scratches, there was even a long crack on the screen. Philipia tapped on the screen and it turned on. It had no password or a lock so it automatically opened. The wallpaper was the default

wallpaper, the apps were glitching and flickering, the weather and the time was also glitching, the time and date skipping and even decreasing by itself.

Philipia didn't think it was anything wrong and thought that it was simply because it was broken. Philipia navigates the phone, swiping here and there, trying the apps on it and even checking the message and contact apps.

The contact apps had nothing but a bunch of '???' on all the names and the list reached 99+. The message was no better. With over 99+ unread messages, 99+ in the inbox, draft, and even sent. Philipia clicked on one of the messages and the contents were just a dense amount of the name 'Neo'.

"Who's Neo?" Philipia asked.

The phone flickered and glitched her out of the message and sent her to the gallery, as if the phone was replying and has a mind of its own.

Philipia furrowed her eyebrows and saw an album with the name labeled 'Neo'.

Philipia opened it. Unlike the 99+ that she kept seeing, the album only has 143 photos. But perhaps due to the broken phone and the glitching, most of the photos were corrupted and the images were no longer the original. Philipia kept swiping up till she saw three photos that were unlike the rest. Three of them were named. 'Rose', 'Him', and 'Home'.

The 'Rose' photo was filled with black but Philipia can see the outline of a white rose being held by someone. The 'Him' was a silhouette of a man standing under a bunch of trees and the 'Home' was someone standing beside a house by, what looks like the sea.

Philipia drew the phone near, trying to make out the picture when it suddenly started glitching and exited the app. It prompted that it was low on battery.

Philipia felt uncertain about those three photos. It gave her a sense

of familiarity as well as pain. It was as if the photo made her feel complete yet it could not shake the feeling of grief. That's right, grief. Philipia felt grief and indignation.

Massaging her aching chest, Philipia doubted her feelings before she went to find a charger, charged the phone by her bedside, brushed her teeth and finally went to bed.

Outside the house, the same woman with the black dress stood in the same place. Her pitch black veil danced with the breeze, like a lonely ghoul wandering the night in search of a purpose.

As the golden light was starting to show itself, the woman watched the golden belt for a while before she walked towards the house.

The front door was locked but she fumbled in her dress and took out a wire. The door clicked and it opened. The woman walked inside casually, her soft footsteps were calm and collected. The owner of the house remained asleep, her soft breathing was obvious and loud in the quiet room. The woman looked around as if reminiscing a certain memory. She then reaches for the phone charging by the bedside and unplugged the port. The low battery prompt disappeared and the battery was once again full.

The woman looked at Philipia for a moment before leaving. The house was undisturbed and still the same as usual as if her presence was merely a shadow and fleeting.

The woman did not look back and continued walking until her figure was enveloped by the remaining darkness in the breaking of the dawn.

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Chapter 48 : It's time to move on

Philipia woke up with a feeling like her body had been run over by a truck. It wasn't painful but it felt like her body was tossed and turned all over the place.

Before she could tidy herself up, there was a knock on her front door. “Philipia? Are you awake?”

Philipia groaned and massage her forehead as she got up from her bed. “Who is it?” She called.

Can someone let her sleep? She deserves the rest of the day.

“It's China. Can I come in?”

Philipia blinked a few times. She doubted for a second before hastily wearing her bathrobe and covering her head with a towel.

Philipia tiptoed towards the front door and peeked at the peephole. “W-why are you here?” she asked.

China, standing outside, pursed his lips. “I was worried,” he answered.

Philipia stood in front of her front door. She listened to the tone of concern in China's voice before opening a small gap in the door. “It's just... you, right?”

China smiled as he saw the small head peeking out. It was like coaxing a timid cat to come out of its hiding spot. But this timid cat can wrestle with him and he'll lose... For sure.

“Egypt wanted to come but something came up and Nepal had to watch over the greenhouse. The coldest of time in Tethyria is coming.”

Philipia looked at the smoke coming out of his lips every time he speaks. She was in a daze for a second before snapping out of it. She hesitantly opened the door with a quiet creaking sound.

Seeing the door that opened to welcome him in, albeit hesitant, China was still relieved. On the way here, he was worried Philipia might refuse his visit since this wasn't the ‘Philipia’ everybody knows.

Thinking about Belarus' words. He cast his worried gaze at the youth who covered her head with a towel, shoulders raised, and the bathrobe tightly held.

Philipia, sensing his gaze, felt nervous and ashamed. But still, as the owner with a guest in her house, she accommodated and gestured for him to take a sit. “I'll make you some coffee.”

China softens his gaze. He never liked coffee. Nonetheless, he nodded and took a seat, “Thank you. Black coffee is fine.”

Philipia gave a nod and went to the kitchen. Listening to the sound of a tea kettle, water, and various other porcelains clicking, China felt a sense of warmth and thought this is what a ‘home’ must feel like.

China couldn't help himself but loosen his tense muscle and slowly sink onto the soft sofa. He heard the sound of a teaspoon clicking on the mug, Philipia must be putting the coffee now; the kettle correspondingly whistled, reminding her that the water's boiling, then the sound of water being poured on the cup sounded, that constant pouring was hypnotizing it made China yawn and was tempted to close his eyes and sleep.

The ambiance and atmosphere were just right it gave the illusion of peace. The kitchen was the type of open area so he could see what was happening. He looked at Philipia's back which looked small and fragile, but he knew that she was far from being fragile. She wasn't some kind of porcelain that could shatter with a drop

When Philipia was done preparing the coffee, she saw the country leader, who was one of her oldest trading partners, asleep on her

couch—very comfortably.

Philipia: “……”

Philipia quietly placed the tray on the coffee table and observed China's sleeping face. He looked so comfortable, peaceful, and relaxed. He must've been so tired. Thinking of his feelings for Filipia and his worried attitude since early in the morning, she felt like it was only natural to be tired.

Then... How about the coffee? It'll probably be cold when he wakes up.

Philipia sighed. She placed a lid on China's coffee and a blanket over the sleeping leader. “Sweet dreams, China.”

China had a dream. He dreamt of a memory he didn't know he had.

Was it because it happened a long time ago?

Leaders have no sense of time. For them, time is just time. It is constant and it is running. They are immortal and cannot die of old age, but even if they're immortal, they can still die.

China knew he was dreaming. He felt the weightlessness as if he was just one of those leaves that fall and are carried by the wind. He looked around his ‘dream’ and noticed that he was standing on the shore.

There were coconut trees and fishing boats. China couldn't recognize which part of his country is this place. It was then a small figure ran past him from behind.

Looking at that small figure's back, he was a young boy wearing a red hanfu with a gray robe. The sleeves were big and they looked like wings as it dances against the wind.

That's me.

China thought and followed his younger self in his dream.

The young China didn't run for a long time before he stopped.

China also stopped and followed the gaze of his younger self. Not far from them, a young girl was playing by the seashore. She lifted her skirt to prevent it from getting wet as she bent down to fish shells. When she sees one, she'll examine it for a second before throwing it back into the water.

China couldn't help but smile, fully aware of how his younger self had a huge crush on young Philipia. Always peeking at her whenever he had the chance, running away just to find her whenever his father would leave for trade in theirs.

The young China took a deep breath, fix himself, and take out a box with a wax seal on top from his sleeve pocket. China went closer to his younger self, looking at the sealed box in doubt.

Weird, what is this?

The young China clears his throat and ‘elegantly’ walked towards the young Philipia minding her own business.

Young Philipia saw Young China walking over and beamed at him. “Hello, China!”

Young China visibly turned red and said in his language. “Hello. It's a nice weather today, right?”

China: “……”

Ughh... He(China) can't watch this. This is too painful.

Young Philipia didn't understand but instead smiled. “Okay!”

China: “……”

Noooooooooo...

Young China saw her smile and felt like his day just got even brighter. She was more dazzling than the sun itself.

Young China arrogantly pushed the sealed box toward young Philipia. In his hand, a beautiful aquamarine color box with a scarlet red wax, a young boy who barely knew the word ‘love’

innocently hands out his heart.

Young Philipia was surprised at first but then beamed into a smile when she saw the box. “For me?” she points herself.

Young China nodded while looking away. His cheeks stained crimson.

Young Philipia walked out of the shore, pat her hand dry using her skirt, and was about to accept the gift when she halted right before touching it.

Young China was visibly confused, even China, not far away, was the same. He glanced at the blank expression on young Philipia's face and thought how it looked familiar.

“That's...”

Suddenly, the bright eyes that seemed to shine like the sun lost their luster and looked at the young China in suspicion. Her beaming smile was replaced by fear as if she was on guard against him.

“Who are you?” Young Philipia asked.

Young China blinked a few times and looked at the girl in front of him. Why does she look at him like that? Why does it feel like she's treating him like a stranger?

“What's wrong? Are you ill?” Young China raised his hand and wanted to feel her temperature. But as if she was provoked, young Philipia's face paled, and slap his hand away.

“Don't touch me!” Young Philipia hugged herself and ran away, leaving a stupefied young China. It was only when he felt the sting from his hand did he realize that his crush, not only changed her mind but also aggressively rejected him.

This undoubtedly hurt the young heart of young China.

China watched the whole thing and finally remembered. After what happened, he ran back to his grandfather, aggrieved, and told him

about what had happened. His grandfather simply laughed and thought that kids will be kids. Feelings don't last long for them. But for the young him back then, he was terribly hurt, and perhaps he couldn't accept the rejection, he naturally forgot about it the next day and still played with Philipia.

But now, seeing this specific memory again, China knew that it was the real Philipia who rejected him. Perhaps the two personalities were still new and still adjusting, the real Philipia would sometimes come out.

When the grandfather clock sounded, China woke up. Seeing the unfamiliar ceiling, China was confused for a second before the realization kicked in.

He fell asleep.

China got up so fast that he felt his head sways and his sight filled with flashing light and dotted black. “Ph-Philipia?” He called out while rubbing his forehead.

Philipia, sitting across China on another sofa, flinched. While China was sleeping, Philipia drank her coffee while chatting with South Korea.

Philipia puts her phone down and clears her throat to get his attention. China looked over and saw the youth sitting so behaved.

“I'm sorry. That was rude of me.”

Philipia took one pillow and hugged it, replying without lifting her head. “It's fine...”

China sits properly and saw the coffee, still emitting smoke. Thank goodness he didn't sleep for too long, he must've felt too relaxed he unknowingly fell asleep.

Now that China was awake, Philipia felt the shame that just went away. This is why she doesn't like having people over... Unless it's South Korea.

China also noticed the awkward atmosphere. “That's right, I forgot

to take the phone that I asked to borrow." Anyways, let's just change the subject.

"Hmm... it disappeared." She replied with a soft voice.

"What? The phone? Did you lose it?"

Philipia shook her head. She hugged the pillow even tighter. "The phone. It disappeared."

Philipia showed China where she put the phone. The charger was still plugged yet the cord rest on the bedside table. "I charged it last night right here. Then, I went to get my phone and I saw it was gone."

Philipia explained and China believed her. "There's only one explanation. Someone came here and took it."

"Probably."

"Are you worried?"

Philipia shook her head in response. "No. I feel like whoever took it, or whoever it was, they didn't have any bad intentions. Before you guys came here, I think I saw someone..."

"You did? Can you describe them to me?"

Philipia finally looked at China. "I don't have to. I'm suspecting it's Lihim."

"That black-veiled woman?"

Philipia nodded. "She was looking at me, right..." She looked around the room and stood in a specific place facing the bed, "Here."

China contemplated. His hand is on his chin, a habit he does when thinking. "It further proves that Lihim is like us. She's a leader or a half."

"How are you sure it's her though?"

Philipia bit her nails. “I guessed... ”

China unconsciously pulled her hand back, preventing her from eating her nails out. “But, why now I wonder?”

Philipia looked at China's hand holding her arm and felt a little embarrassed.

“I don't know.”

The two went back into the living room. China was still in deep thought as he try to connect a few things. Philipia was sitting on the opposite side, fidgeting in her seat. She looked up and observe his focused look, from time to time, he'll mutter something under his breath and shake his head with a sigh.

Philipia didn't bother the leader anymore. She picked up her phone and resumed her conversation with South Korea.

IamK-pop: [Are you free this Sunday?]

Philipia: [I don't know. Perhaps. I'll check my schedule]

IamK-pop: [You wanna go on a date with me? (´ε `)]

Philipia: [A date? Where?]

IamK-pop: [Anywhere! Don't you wanna spend some time with me? <<33]

Philipia: [I want to spend time with South! I want a date!]

South Korea, laying on his bed, hugged his pillow and yelled at the top of his lungs.

Antarctica looked at South's door while eating a blueberry popsicle with a Tabasco and tilted his head. “What's wrong with him?”

IamK-pop: [Alright! It's settled! Once you're free, you and I are going on a date!]

Philipia couldn't help but smile as she replied with an [ok]. She

glanced up at China again and saw that he was scrutinizing her.

!!!!

“U-uhm...” Philipia was caught off-guard and subconsciously hid her phone, like a daughter who was caught by her father.

China realized he was being rude again so he stopped and set his thoughts aside regarding the black-veiled woman and the mysterious phone when he saw Philipia absorbed on her phone, typing very fast while smiling. The sound of her fingers tapping was particularly loud in the living room.

He has never seen this side of her. The Philipia he knew would always be writing in her notebook or journal, watering her sampaguitas, reading a book, or getting fresh air. Never once had he seen her holding her phone and using it to chat with someone.

Although he didn't mind, it was a refreshing scene for him, it felt like the Philipia right now looked more natural, more real. It wasn't like someone who no one can touch anymore, like a god who abandoned heaven and became mortal. It's someone you can touch and pull down to hell.

While he snapped out of his stupor and intrusive thoughts, he saw Philipia put her phone down with a big smile. The kind of smile where the eyes were bent. But when she looked at him, the smile disappeared, replaced by surprise and alienation. The former closeness and intimacy were no longer there, the position he worked so hard to stay by her side, disappeared.

“Sorry, I didn't mean to stare.”

Philipia avoided eye contact as she shook her head.

Anyways, China came here to see her condition. Seeing that she looks fine and didn't seem to be in pain anymore. Perhaps he should leave and not pressure her anymore.

The moment he leaves this house would be the moment he says goodbye to Philipia... His Philipia.

“It's fine...” She replied.

China stood up and walked over in her direction, causing Philipia to sink and back away. “W-what do you want?”

China kneeled and looked up at the youth who looked at him apprehensively, an expression he never knew existed. “Don't worry, I won't hurt you—I could never hurt you. Aside from checking on you, I wanted to say... No, it should be that I wanted to confirm something. May I?”

China offered his hand. Looking at his palm, the callouses and knuckles, Philipia stared at it in doubt. But there were no malice, nor any signs of danger.

In fact, from this position, Philipia could kick him in the face, and slam it on the edge of the coffee table to render him unconscious if she wants, it would only take a minute for it to happen.

But she didn't. She trusted her gut and carefully placed her hand on his.

China smiled before closing his eyes.

In the dim living room with only two people inside. A mark of a dancing golden dragon appeared on China's skin. It curled around his arms, torso, and neck. Various other marks around his body also appeared but were hidden within his clothes yet the light was too dazzling it penetrates through the fabric. Even if it's hidden, its radiance cannot hide.

Philipia knew what he was about to do and was about to take her hand back when China gently held it, and said through gritted teeth, “Please don't... leave.”

When he opened his eyes, it glowed.

The marks on his left arm, a sign that he committed his soul to his beloved, slowly lost their luster and vanished.

“She's not coming back...”

Philipia saw China's brokenhearted expression and knew that he found out.

Filipia's not coming back. She chose not to come back anymore. She irresponsibly left, but at the same time, this was the most humane and only way for her to leave.

When China felt the thinnest connection he had with Philipia snap and disappear, he was unable to stop his tears from falling.

China stood up and put his marks away. “This is goodbye. Thank you...” he looked at Philipia, the Philipia nobody knew existed, the Philipia whom the world denied and hid behind a mask she didn't even know. He looked at the lack of brilliance and vitality of her eyes, despite it filled with a million diamonds, he felt nothing. Not because he didn't care or is unaffected by the eyes, but because those eyes were someone else now.

“What was her real name?”

Philipia pursed her lips and answered, “Filipia.”

China muttered the name. As if tasting the warmth she once brought. “I see. Thank you, for bringing her into this world, and introducing her to us. She helped a lot of people, she was a good person and I'm sure you are too.”

“She is... but I'm not good. I'm not like her at all.”

China didn't say anymore. He gave a bow to Philipia, assuming a distance of an acquaintance. Like how he treated the other leaders. He loved Filipia, he fell for her and cared for her, but he wasn't for her. It's time for him to let go, time to move on.

It's too unfair and insulting to keep treating Philipia as if she's Filipia, a separated individual, the main host of the body.

“Let me introduce myself again. I am the country leader China. A pleasure to make your acquaintance, country leader Philipia.

...

Philipia stared at the empty cup of coffee she made for China. Before he left, he drank the whole thing down and left with a friendly and professional smile.

The intimacy and the closeness instantly disappeared.

Philipia sat on the sofa, hugging her knees close to her chest. She placed her chin on her knees. “I envy you Filipia. A lot of people love you.”

Sighing, Philipia lay on the sofa. She didn't want to move or do anything. The sun is high up, the light pierces through the glass. Molted shadows of the leaves from outside dance on the floor. It's such a good day to do some exercise or gardening, take a walk, or hiking.

It felt peaceful, the breeze was gentle and warm. The trees were rustling in the light wind, the grass blowing as if to keep everything cool. It wasn't as hot as it could have been during the summer, but it still managed to be quite pleasant.

But the opposite could be said inside the house. It was cold, quiet, and lonely. There weren't many sounds coming from outside, no music or laughter drifting through the windows. As much as she tried to convince herself that this was her home, it didn't feel like it. It felt more like a prison cell than a living space.

Just then, her phone sounded and an email notification popped up on the screen. She took out the device and opened the message, and thought that it must've been South Korea. But her hopes were dashed immediately after reading the contents.

It was as if the quiet room became even quieter. Her hands couldn't stop shaking from nervousness and fear, anger and sadness. She didn't know how long she sat there, letting the emotions build up inside of her before calming down.

This is fine. She'll let it be for now, but she wouldn't let this slip away. She wouldn't let a single chance slip away. They have to succeed and since Martial already knew and didn't even bother to stop it, it meant he was ready to face her.

Or it could be that he never saw her as an enemy enough to scare him or change his plans. For Martial, everyone was weak, everyone was below him. He wouldn't spend some senseless energy into something unimportant.

No one is worthy for him.

But Philipia will make sure he'll regret it. He'll regret he never took her seriously.

She looked at her phone again, not sure what to do with it. Talking to someone else would only make things worse, but she has to let them know.

_____

So...

I was depressed because I failed my bar exam. ಥ□ಥ

_____

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Chapter 49 : An ancient being

A few days passed, and the cold transitioned into something even colder. The snow fell in great waves that could hide a child or two at times. A terrible wind blew down from the north and it was as if everything were on fire, except for the endless white of the snow.

Philipia walked along the sidewalk, her boots sinking into the fresh powdery snow. She had been out for several hours already but she hadn't found anything worthwhile yet. She wondered why she bothered coming up here to look around when there wasn't much left of the city anyway. Even so, she wasn't idle. She was going back and fro, trying to finish what Filipia had started, trying to make up something to prevent any loss or tragedy.

Even so, Philipia couldn't help but feel like something bad was going to happen. It was a feeling that was always present with her. She felt it in her bones, in her heart, in her stomach. Her gut kept telling her to hurry up, there's no time, you're running out of time! But she continued to walk aimlessly through the empty streets. The winter sun shone weakly through the clouds above her head and illuminated the snowfall that blanketed the area. Some people would call it beautiful; others might say it looked sad. Philipia didn't care. As long as it covered the ground, she was fine with it being this way. Still, she wished things weren't like they were now.

She looked up at the gloomy sky and falling snow, some of which fell on her face. She didn't bother to wear a mask now. After that time with China, Egypt, and Nepal. She didn't bother to hide her gloomy eyes now. Unlike Filipia, her eyes were empty and devoid of light. The diamonds inside were lacking their life. It's the difference between beauty and ugliness. When it's Filipia, her eyes change into something beautiful, always shining, always glowing, always beaming with life. Unlike her, it's dark and dim, its surface is rough, it's dull, lifeless, and even though it has life, it's nothing more than a shell that contains the life within.

That's how I'm supposed to be, right? Philipia thought.

That's what everyone thinks of me. As if I'm not perfect at all—unlike her. No one should ever think about me like that.

Somehow, she managed to keep herself from crying.
I can't give in to those thoughts anymore. I can't keep comparing myself with another part of myself.

Suddenly, her phone rang, snapping her from her self-deprecation. She checked the caller ID. "Hello?"

"Hey! Are you still around?" a voice called out.

"Yes," Philipia replied.

Her tone had changed since speaking with South Korea.

"Great! Where are you? I'll come to you!"

Philipia smiled, her cheeks turning red. "I'll come to you instead."

The snowflakes caught in her long hair as she turned and began walking again. It was almost impossible to see where she was going, but she knew the general direction she needed to go.

Eventually, she reached the place South told her. Much like everywhere else, it's as white as a blank canvas. There's no sign of life anywhere. And even though the snow has fallen for a while, it hasn't melted in most places.

As Philipia approached, she could hear the sound of machinery moving somewhere far away. Then, she heard a whistle and someone clapping to get her attention.

Philipia looked over and saw South with a car behind him. "What are you doing here?" she asked.

South laughed. He was wearing a black leather jacket and jeans, as well as an old-school hat. His smile reminded her of an angel. "Oh, just driving around, checking out the neighborhood. You know, making sure everything's safe and stuff," he said, "It's pretty quiet out here."

Philipia huffed and white smoke was coming out. South grinned, went inside his car, and took a beautiful blue and black scarf. "It's cold. Although Winter is beautiful and has its perks, it can make you sick."

Philipia was wrapped with a scarf, and the slight cold she felt, slowly vanished from the warmth it brought. South's hand was cold too but, Philipia's heart felt warm.

South opened the door of his car. "Get in."

Philipia nodded and got in.

"Where are we going?"

"You'll see in a minute," South answered.

"Okay..."

They drove around for about twenty minutes before reaching their destination.

"This is where I live!" South exclaimed as they pulled up to a house. He parked the car and came around to open her door.

Philipia stepped out into the cold air. She looked at the house and thought 'Ah, it does look like something South would choose'.

The house looked like any normal home in Tethyria, except for the fact that it was mostly made of stone with very little wood used to build it. There was one section of it that was built of steel bars and glass that gave the house a very modern appearance.

"Come, let's go inside," South said.

Philipia nodded and followed him to the front door.

He placed his finger on the knob of the door and it issued a short melody before it opened. "This is something every apartment in my country has. So I thought of implementing it here in my own house! It's cool right?"

Philipia nodded, smiling while looking at South.

When they got inside, South provided her with an indoor slipper. Although the house from the outside mainly used concrete, the floor and the interior inside used wood. "Here, the floor could be cold so wear this."

South kneeled and helped her wear the slippers. "Ah! I can do it" Philipia hastily said, curling her feet.

South looked up at her and shook his head. "I want to help you."

Philipia looked into his eyes and couldn't refuse him. She nodded and let South hold her cold feet and helped her wear the slippers with a fluff ball on top.

"Thank you," she said.

South grinned and stood up. "Come on, I'll make you something warm to drink."

After putting on the slippers, she walked to the kitchen and sat on a stool. Her hands were shaking slightly from the cold.

"Do you want some tea?"

Philipia nodded and watched as he prepared the hot water.

"This is my house. I hope you don't mind that it's a bit... bare. I've only moved in recently, but I couldn't wait to show it to you. What do you think?"

Like Philipia's open kitchen, South's kitchen was the same. She could see everything from the living room. On the wall opposite the entrance, there was a large flat-screen TV with a wide range of channels. The dining table was in the center of the room, and it had four chairs that faced the TV. A small sideboard stood next to the couch. A table lamp was lit near the window.

"It looks good," Philipia replied.

"I thought so. Now, let's sit down and I'll make us something warm

to drink."

Philipia was about to take a sit when she saw, on the desk below the flat-screen TV, a few picture frames. In the middle was a picture of her and South and beside it is a picture of him and North. The two were sitting on a velvet chair, looking all neat. At first, Philipia thought that she didn't know how to react, but then she realized that she should be happy.
"Why did you put these here?" she asked, looking up at South.

South looked back and realize Philipia saw the pictures. He was embarrassed but he pouted. "Even though I hate the guy, he's still my bro and we only have each other now. It's kind of annoying."

Philipia picked up a picture of a younger South and North with a big golden-haired dog in the middle. South was smiling happily, his smile reaching from ear to ear, meanwhile, North just gave a shallow smile, even so, it was a genuine smile. Both of them held the golden-haired dog.

"What's the name of the dog?"

South unconsciously smiled as he thought of his pet. "Her name's Byul. It means star. She's a spoiled and well-groomed dog."

Philipia nodded in understanding. Which reminds her, how's her dog? Although it was Filipia who found her, it was still considered hers, right?

"How is she?"

South scratched his head. "Hehe. That picture's from a long time ago. Byul already died."

"Oh. I'm sorry for your loss," Philipia puts the picture down, feeling a little guilty opening an old wound.

South carried a tray with their tea and placed it on the coffee table. "Nah, it's fine, you don't have to feel guilty about it. Sure, I bailed my eyes out when she died but, it was such a long time ago."

"I'm glad that you're able to move on," Philipia said.

"Yeah, I guess I am," South agreed. "But I'm still grateful for everything she did for me and North. When our parents were always busy, she accompanied us and made sure we had the attention we needed. You might not believe me but North often plays with her, I guess he was feeling lonely most of the time."

Philipia imagined a young North playing with a big golden dog and couldn't help her lips from ticking up.

South chuckled and poked her nose, "I know and it's all fun and dandy to imagine my bro, right now I'm the one currently standing in front of her, so it's best to only think of me~" he winked.

Philipia stiffened and her pretty little face couldn't help but turned beet red. "Please don't tease me so much, I can understand your words behind it!"

South laughed and raised both hands in surrender, "Okay, okay, I won't, who made our Philipia easily embarrassed?"

Philipia stomped her feet and gently pinched South, "Stop it!"

"Hahahaha! Okay! Okay! Ouchie, such a strong grip!"

"I didn't pinch you that hard."

Both of them took a seat and South poured tea on her cup. "Make sure to drink it while it's warm, but don't burn yourself."

While looking around the place, Philipia saw the stairs leading up. "Your bedroom is upstairs?"

South paused from pouring himself some tea and couldn't help but remind, "asking a man if his bedroom is upstairs, are you sure you're not inviting me?" His tone almost sounded like a complaint.

Philipia tilted her head in confusion before she understood what he meant. "N-no! I was just asking!"

South laughed, "I know, hahaha! It's just fun teasing you~"

Philipia pouted and resumed drinking her tea. Looking away. Her

obvious attitude to ignore him made South grin.

"My bedroom is indeed upstairs but... It's best if you don't go up."

"Why?" Philipia asked, now facing him.

"Ermm..."

If the rooms downstairs were neat, well-arranged, and tidy. Then the rooms upstairs were the opposite. Boxes and cardboard were littered around with no space to place to walk through. Especially his bedroom, which was filled with a mountain of boxes all written with a marker: [Clothes]

"These are all clothes? All of these? In these boxes?"

"Uhhh... Yes?"

Philipia: "....."

"It's a mess isn't it?"

"Yes..."

South sighed and lowered his head. "I've been meaning to clean it up for days, but I keep procrastinating. I told myself I'd clean it up once I get my job done."

"You don't say..."

South covered his face and turned his back to her. "Aw come on! You don't have to look at me like that! I'm not such a messy person! Really!"

Philipia narrowed her eyes at him, "You are, you're just too ashamed to admit it."

South exhaled loudly and scratched his cheek. "Okay, you got me. But, I'm better than that! I'll try my very best to fix this mess."

"I don't doubt you will," Philipia assured.

"I knew you'd understand" South grinned and ran back downstairs,

as though he was afraid Philipia might force him to clean up.

South was washing the dishes when Philipia peeked into the kitchen. She could see a pile of dirty plates, cups, and utensils on the sink.

"Will you help me with the dishes?" South saw Philipia peeking and invited her in.

Philipia nodded and rolled her sleeves up, "I'll wash and you'll dry them."

The two leaders washed the dishes, and South did all the talking while Philipia did all the listening, sometimes, she'll reply or inquire more and South would happily answer. The atmosphere was harmonious and it felt warm.

Philipia stayed for a bit more before South drove her back to her house.

"Once Winter ends, school's starting. How do you feel?" South asked while driving. Philipia looked outside, watching the passing scenery.

"I don't know. I don't even feel like going to school. And I'm not as smart as Filipia, although I can remember a few things from her, most of them had become hazy as if waking up from a long dream," Phillipia said.

"You're smart enough," South said. "It's just that you haven't been able to focus on studying."

"Perhaps..."

The conversation ended there. South saw her mood fall but didn't say anything more. He knows philipia could do it. If there's anyone he trusted more than his brother, it would be her. She can make the impossible become possible after all.

When they arrived, Philipia unbuckled her seatbelt, got off the car, and closed the door. She bent down a little to the window's height and said, “Thank you for today, South.”

South smiled. “Anytime my lady~ if you're ever feeling down, just remember I'm only a phone call away, and you know where I live now.”

Philipia smiled and took a step back intending to watch him drive away. South chuckled and said, “Go on now. The driver always has to make sure the lady gets inside first before driving away.”

Philipia nodded and ran back inside her house. Standing on her front porch, she looked back to see the car still there, South looking at her with his full attention. Philipia pursed her lips and waved at him before going inside.

Once the lady finally got in, South breathed a sigh of relief before driving away. While on the road, his phone sounded. He connected the device to his car and answered the call, “What's up?”

“Were you with her?”

South scoffed disdainfully, “Even if you didn't tell, I would've been with her!”

China and the rest of the other leaders who Philipia just met with earlier to discuss their plan, listened to South's voice through the phone that was on speaker. Germany, France, New Zealand, Australia, Greece, Poland, Egypt, and Nepal.

While Canada and America listened on the other side of the continent.

There were more leaders but they couldn't join in due to unforeseen circumstances.

North was in the student council room, and said on the phone, “You idiot didn't do anything, right?”

South exclaimed, “What do you mean?! Am I such monster in your eyes?! You should be grateful it was me and not you! You're the monster between us, asshole!”

China sighed while rubbing his forehead. “Enough, both of you.” He said. Both North and South shut their mouth. “How is she?”

South thought of Philipia and her cute reactions to his teasing. But he didn't want to say it or share it. It was only his and Philipia's little interaction. “She was a bit down when leaving Greg's place.”

Greg, sitting on the stairs, looked over. He withered and sighed. It felt like he was being called out for being the worst brother of the year while Jack, inside the kitchen, was leaning on the counter, thoughts unknown.

South stopped at the red light and leaned back on his seat, “anyways, I was able to cheer her up. I think... Even so, let's just let her be. If she doesn't want to talk to any of us, then don't. School's starting soon... it'd be best if you idiots stop being such assholes.”

China's eyes twitched and had the urge to reprimand this weirdo. “I see...” he replied.

Greece scoffed as he played with Athena's feathers. “I told you so. You are too hellbent on someone who doesn't want to talk. I just don't get why you guys are so worked up.”

France scowled at him. “What's it to you?! You're the only one who doesn't care.”

Greece scowled back. “I don't care, but at least I'm not insensitive!”

Egypt stood between them and tried to intervene in the argument, “Alas, both of you. Is this the time to fight? Didn't we all have an agreement? In this room, everyone is equal, your country, your home, your people will also be affected if we don't do something.”

“That's the reason why I'm here, meanwhile the rest of you are here for ‘feelings’ that wouldn't be reciprocated. I bet he doesn't even care since he's just a leader without a position, his sister's the one who governs and handles all his country's affairs.”

France's eyes widen and felt a boiling wrath rising, “You—!”

Before he could vent his anger, someone did first.

There was a loud sound of skin contact. Everyone froze and was surprised to see Germany standing and slapping Greece's face.

Athena, due to shock, flew around the living room and perched herself on Greg's shoulder who was still wallowing in self-regret.

Greece was equally as surprised as everyone. Who would've thought this occult-obsessed maniac would lay a hand on someone? Usually, he doesn't meddle in someone's argument or even argue with someone as long as it doesn't involve his precious ‘club’.

But now. Seeing the man standing up to someone other than Philipia, rendered everyone speechless. Poland was the first to snap out of it and hesitantly called, “G-Germany? You... did you slap...”

“Yes, I did. I slapped an annoying, disrespectful, and immature leader. He should know his place and status.”

Poland's open mouth slowly closed. “I... see”

Greece snapped his head towards Germany. The sensation on his cheek made him annoyed and angry. “What the fuck?! What the hell is wrong with you?!” as he was about to stand up and fight back, Germany slapped him again on the other side of his cheek and used his foot to press him down on the couch. “You son of a bi—”

“You call yourself a leader but you're an embarrassment! Insulting his status is one thing, but stepping on his pride and feelings without even knowing the person, is what you call being insensitive —the thing you claimed not to be one! Do you even hear the hypocrisy in your words?! If you're here because you're worried about your country's future, stay and behave like a good boy, but if you're here to deny your true purpose, and say things you shouldn't say, then leave, we don't need leaders like you!”

Germany withdraws his foot from Greece's chest and huffed before fixing his collar and sleeves. “Since Philipia is gone and our meeting's adjourned, I shall take my leave. Goodbye and good day.”

Turning to his heels, he went to the coat hanger and wore his coat, scarf, his gloves, and hat before leaving the house. After a soft ‘click’ the door closed and the living room was silent.

New Zealand clears his throat and stood up, walking towards the

kitchen. “I'll go and get some ice.”

Australia stood at the back, trying not to get everyone's attention as he chatted with Malaysia and Indonesia about what happened at a fast speed.

AussiesOnly: OmG! You wouldn't believe what just happened! w(˚ o ˚)w

Meanwhile, the people from the other side of the phone, who heard everything, were also surprised. Especially South who had to park on the side of the road and America who increased the volume to hear the gossip and drama.

Canada stood up and said, “There's still a lot of work to do. I'm leaving.”

America looked at his brother's gloomy back, not knowing what he was thinking, he could only sigh and feel bad. He knows his brother's intense feelings for Philipia, but after knowing what happened to her and her switch of person, his brother had been depressed for quite some time now.

America doesn't know what to feel. Should he feel sad that the person they've been with was just a personality? Or should he be happy that the number of rivals decreased? Even so, it doesn't change the fact he felt complicated. He'd seen the Philipia, the “real” one, or so China said, and didn't feel any different.

For him, even if it was an alter, it doesn't change the fact that they've spent a few years together, spent a few festivals and events in school, studied and crammed together, ate lunch together, attended classes, and contemplated which club to choose from together. They experienced a lot in just a few years... And it was enough to understand her, get to know her.

Truth be told, America felt unwilling. He wanted to talk to Philipia whom he spent time. He wanted to talk to her, even if it was just for a minute. He wanted to know if he was as important as she was to him.

“Don't fight anymore,” he said, after a long silence. “We're all in this together now. We've started this, we all willingly joined, no one was forced to join. So get all your shit together and wait for the signal.”

China replied, “Don't worry, you do your thing there and we'll take care of everything on this side.”

When the call ended, America leaned on the back of the sofa.

America only joined recently after China talked to him about it. One night, China came to him looking grim and saddened, he didn't know what to do, so he could only tell him everything. China always felt like it wasn't enough, they weren't enough, it felt like the plan didn't have a proper foundation, it didn't have a proper preparation. And after knowing that Martial was aware of their existence and actions, he felt even more anxious. So he could only go to him, and ask for his aid and choice. Even if it wasn't for Philipia or anything personal, as long as it involves the whole state of their lives and their country, America would've still joined.

If it was before, he would've looked down on Martial. But now... Despite being a leader of a third-world country, he was powerful enough to render a continent leader weak. He shouldn't be underestimated, he shouldn't be judged because of where he came from.

A man with a heart for power, hatred, and revenge should never be looked down on. He walked a road of no return. People should fear him...

America held his shoulder that was unconsciously trembling. He thought of what he saw when he was in the academy, he saw Martial coming out of the principal's office. When Martial slowly turned towards him, he felt tremendous pressure as if a mountain was crushing his whole body. The amount of fear was so overwhelming alarms were blaring. ‘Run’, ‘Get away’, ‘Go!’ These thoughts occupied his head, his whole body screamed in fear and panic, he wanted to run but he couldn't, as if he was glued to the floor, tied down by millions of chains.

It was just one look it felt like the life was squeezed out of him. Martial merely gave him a glance before walking the opposite way. If he were to walk in his direction, he would have been—for sure—dead on the spot.

If Philipia's eyes can make one filled to the brim with love, passion, and lust. Then Martial's eyes can make one filled to the brim with pain, anguish, fear, anger, and hatred. It was so overwhelming and when America could move again, he dashed straight to the men's restroom and threw up. He didn't eat anything since earlier so it was only liquid and saliva that came out, even so, it felt like he could breathe again, it felt like he threw up the feelings he just felt.

Thinking about that short but abrupt encounter, America still shudders from fear.

This is bad. This is really, really bad. That man shouldn't succeed. He must never succeed...

While the rest of the leaders were having their problems, Philipia encountered her own.

“Had fun?” Martial asked while sitting languidly on the sofa with his legs on the coffee table.

Philipia was standing by the door, gripping the keys in her palm, but she couldn't feel the pain, she could only feel nervous and tread carefully when talking to this madman.

“Brother...”

Martial smirked. “How was your first ever house visit?”

Philipia was startled and looked at Martial apprehensively. Seeing her uneasy face, Martial couldn't help bursting with laughter. “You should see your face, it's so obvious you care about that man.”

“Don't hurt him... please,” she pleaded. South was the friend she made herself and not Filipia's. For her, South only belonged to her. But she's powerless against this person. This walking time bomb, one wrong move it'll explode and you don't know what to do. This sense of weakness and being played in the shadows feels irritating,

but she could only endure it.

Just a bit more and it'll all be over...

Martial laughed, his head falling back and resting on the backrest. He laughed and laughed until he abruptly stopped like a switch was turned. “Hurt him...? Hmmm, that doesn't sound like a bad idea.”

“Brother plea— ah! Ghnn!”

Suddenly, heavy pressure fell on Philipia, causing her to fall to her knees.

“You're begging me for someone's life?” Martial got up from the sofa and slowly, step-by-step, walked towards her. He condescendingly looked at her, the dim light of the living room cast a light behind him and a shadow in front. He was like an evil ghoul, yet this spirit didn't have any weakness aside from being a little uncontrollable and crazy.

“Brother, please... you promised.”

“Promised what? I didn't promise anything. Tell me, what did you two do, hmm? Care to share the details with your Big brother?”

Lifting her chin, Martial stared right into her eyes. Identical mismatched eyes but with different expressions looked into each other.

“We didn't do anything... I simply drank some tea and... spent a bit of time there, then I came straight home!”

“That's all?”

“That's all! I swear! we had a deal remember? I can't lie to you!”

Martial looked at Philipia for a while before removing the pressure from her.

Philipia immediately took a deep breath and panted heavily. Her back and forehead were stained with sweat, plip-plopping onto the floor, as her sight became a hazy like a thin layer of fog was

covering her eyes.

“Then answer me this instead,” the hand lifting her chin transitioned into holding her jaw, forcing Philipia to look at him properly. “Why did Egypt, Nepal, and China come here after our little secret? Hm?”

“I don't...know,” Philipia answered with gritted teeth. After her response, a symbol began to glow and burn on her forehead, causing Philipia to groan in pain.

The strength of Martial's hand increased. “Liar, you told them, didn't you? I didn't know you were into people meddling in your business.”

“Nngg! It wasn't me!” Philipia exclaimed, the burning symbol dimming.

“Then who? If it wasn't you, then who?”

“I don't know... Ah!!” the dimming symbol glowed once more, burning even brighter.

“Philipia, answer me! Who!?” Martial's expression became agitated. He hated the fact that there was someone out there, he didn't know, who knew of what was happening. He didn't like the feeling of being unable to control things.

“It's Lihim! It's Lihim!”

Hearing the name, Martial doubted it for a second, but seeing the symbol dimming means Philipia was telling the truth. “Lihim? You knew Lihim?” That woman who appeared and disappeared in their life, the one who accompanied their grandmother and father.

“Papa mentioned Lihim in his letter.”

“Letter? What letter?”

Philipia knew she couldn't lie anymore and would t be able to lie either. Anyways, that letter didn't contain anything other than the code to destroy that place underground, his thoughts and feelings,

and Lihim. Martial also knew of that place's existence but just didn't bother to touch or use it. He didn't want to use someone's help when he was fully capable by himself. That was his pride and he didn't bother to hide or deny that fact.

Martial listened to her story and thought of that box that he couldn't open before. “Interesting...” He said and released Philipia. Blue and purple bruises appeared around her jaw.

“She's still alive...” Martial muttered then turned to Philipia again, “How are you so sure it was Lihim?”

Philipia replied while panting, “Instinct.”

“Ha! That sounds unexpected coming from you. But it's not impossible.”

Philipia remained silent. Pursing her lips, determined not to say anything anymore. She kept her head down and stared at the floor as much as she can.

Martial chuckled, went back to his seat, and lit up a cigar.

They stayed in that position for a while. Martial casually sitting while smoking and Philipia in the same position on the floor.

“Aren't you tired? Come, sit with me.”

Philipia was unresponsive.

Martial was about to use his skill when the marks on Philipia's body glowed for a moment before falling unconscious.

Martial immediately went to her side and shook her. He recognized that skill. It was the same as his but powerful and stronger. Philipia was unconscious but she wasn't in pain, it was as if she was simply asleep.

He hurriedly placed her on the sofa and made sure she was comfortable before taking his coat and opening the door.

Amidst the white expanse of snow outside the door, a woman stood

conspicuously not far from where the house is.

As dark as midnight, her veil danced against the cold wind. The gloomy light of winter shone on her long dress. But even then, the contrast between the two is so great that she looks like a ghost or demon from another world. But Martial was neither impressed nor afraid. Instead, he was pissed.

His hand holding the knob bulged in great strength due to the amount of force he's releasing. “You old ghost... You're not dead.” His words carried malice that could send a shiver down someone's spine.

Lihim held up her hand covered in a black lace glove. Martial immediately released his marks, his eyes glowing and a million diamonds sent their sharp points towards her.

Lihim was unperturbed and unaffected and even sent that same piercing pain back to him. Martial groaned and shaped his hand into a claw, the pressure around them significantly increased even the birds high up in the sky were affected. The slow-falling snow was now as heavy as rocks, falling one by one, creating holes in the white snow on the ground.

Lihim was still unaffected. She stood calm and graceful where she stood. With a few gestures of her hand, the pressure that gave America nightmares and Philipia constrained was easily smashed and destroyed by this ancient being.

Martial coughed up blood, the impact against him was great that it fired back. He glared at this person, the only person who can fight him back. The only person who can make him use his full power just to fight back.

Martial gave a burst of throaty laughter. “Long time no see, Lihim. It's annoying to see your hideous attire as if you're coming back from a funeral all the time.”

Lihim didn't respond, instead, she lifted her hand and snowflakes were being sucked into her palm, forming a crystal ball. She leaned it close to her face and the ball gently flew towards Martial.

Martial sneered and smashed the crystal, shattering it like his pride. But when the crystal ball made contact with his skin, the internal injury healed at a rapid pace.

“I don't need your help!” He yelled and takes out his gun and aimed it at the woman. Lihim didn't move at first before she lifted her dress and ran in the opposite direction. Martial knew she was leading him away but he didn't care, he was pissed and angry he needed something to vent.

Closing the door behind him, he chased after the black-veiled lady.

It was late in the afternoon, the snow was growing stronger. Almost every resident in Tethyria was holed up inside their homes. Windows and doors were shut to prevent the cold from coming in. But unbeknownst to them, there was a fight between a man with a golden gun and a woman dressed in all black.

Lihim kept running, almost as if she had endless energy. The snow and the raining bullets didn't seem to bother her as she ran with magnificence and grace.

Martial was the same and didn't even stop shooting. Every time he feels like catching her or even successfully hitting her, she would always slip away the second right after. It was as if she could read his every move.

This is the only person he can't control. No matter how long he investigated and searched throughout the history of her existence, there would always be a dead end. A long interval of absence and disappearance. Who knows how old she is or where she came from, but one thing is for sure, she is an undeniably powerful being that seemed to have existed since the beginning of time.

Martial kept chasing the woman when she suddenly took a turn and disappeared.

“Damn it!” he exclaimed. Even though it was winter, his body was hot due to his blood boiling from anger. He punched a wall which gained a spiderweb crack.

“Come out! Come out and face me! I don't care who you are or where you're from! Come out and fight me—you bitch!”

His voice echoed in the empty street. Suddenly, he felt someone's eyes and looked up. On one particular house, Lihim stood on their rooftop. The wind blew stronger when in high altitude. But she didn't seem to care...

“Why are you here and what the hell do you want with Philipia!?”

Lihim looked at the man condescendingly, the same way he looked at Philipia earlier. Martial knew what she was doing and felt even more angry.

"I'll kill you." He spat out those words without thinking.

The moment they left his mouth, all of Martial's anger evaporated into nothingness. His hands were empty and his legs refused to move any further than they had already gone. For a second, he thought he'd lost control over himself. It wasn't just his body that didn't obey him; his mind also froze up like an ice sculpture. All he could do was stand there stupidly staring at the woman from below. He didn't like to look up, he didn't like raising his head look at someone.

“Pathetic...” A voice, so cold, sharp, and merciless that it made the air around them tremble, filled Martial's ears. "You're too pathetic for this kind of thing."

A strong gale of cold wind passed through, blowing the veil, and giving Martial a peek of half of her face. He saw a single flash of a smile appear on Lihim's lips before she turned away from him. Her back faced him.

It was the first time he heard her voice. Ever since he could remember, Lihim only spoke to their father and every time they see each other, Lihim would choose to walk away and never appear alone with him.

When Lihim's back faced him, Martial knew she was going to run away again. He wanted to speak, to shout, but he couldn't. He was

under her control, under her mercy—which he loathed and hated to the very core of his body.

But despite the coldness he felt within, Martial's heart still burned with rage. He felt like if he managed to say one word, he'd be able to take back all the things she'd done to him and get the chance to fight back. But there was no sound coming from his throat.

No matter how much he tried, he couldn't open his mouth. As hard as he strained, all he succeeded in doing was creating a little pressure on his tongue.

That was when Lihim turned around and looked at him. “Time is running out...” she whispered and her whisper was carried by the wind.

Martial watched Lihim lean backward and fell.

After a few seconds, he was able to take control of his body again and ran toward the direction where she fell. He expected to see a corpse or evidence of her fall, but it was only a back alley. There was nothing other than undisturbed piles of trash, a stray cat huddled in the corner, and falling undisturbed snow.

Martial became infuriated. Again, over and over again! Damn it!

He takes out his phone and called a certain number. “Get everything ready! Right now!” He yelled and dropped the call. His exasperated expression was enough to kill someone.

“One day I'll be able to kill you... I'll fucking kill you, Lihim.”

How was it? How was Lihim? (□▽□)

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Chapter 50 : The Party

This is a long chapter. There is bound to have grammatical errors and misspellings. (˘･_･˘)

The coldest of winter in Tethyria was finally coming to an end. The snow melted away, the days grew warmer and brighter, and with them came spring's renewal. Birds returned from their southern homes; squirrels made their nests in the trees around town and began building their new lives.

Although you still needed to wear a jacket or two, it was no longer quite as cold. The sun rose higher in the sky each day and set later. If you went out on a clear night, you could see the stars shining like jewels in the dark blue heavens.

At the beach, a few courageous people dare to take a swim. Winter was just ending yet they were excited for the upcoming Spring and Summer.

Sitting by the cold sand, Philipia's thoughts were unknown. She didn't speak, she didn't move, she just sat there staring into space... and so did her companion. They had been doing this for some time now.

"It's cold..." he spoke softly at last. Iceland looked at the youth beside him. “Let's go somewhere else, it's cold.”

Philipia pursed her lips but didn't say anything. She stared into the water, staring at a distant ship she couldn't see. The wind had died down and they were becalmed in the open for hours before Philipia finally said, "I'm not sure it's even possible."

"It is," Iceland said. "It is possible."

Philipia saw a crab that came out of the sand and walked sideways

with its claws up. She watched it bump into her legs, confused as to why it can't go through.

A few days ago with Martial, she suddenly went unconscious. When she woke up, she was alone, laying on her sofa, wondering what happened and where Martial is. As she was about to get up and look for him, the front door violently opened with Martial walking inside, his shirt covered in blood with the strong smell of gunpowder.

Philipia shuddered at his appearance and thought of every possibility of what happened. Did he kill someone? Did he hurt someone? Did he... Touch South?

Just the thought of him touching South almost made her mad. Fortunately, she controlled herself and carefully inquired. “Brother... what happened?”

Martial ignored her presence, went straight to the kitchen, opened the fridge, and opened himself a can of beer from who knows where. She was sure she didn't buy any beer.

Instead of replying to Philipia like he always does, he instead said, “There's going to be a party hosted by Asean. I can't attend so you'll be attending in my stead. I suggest you go, this might just become your last party.”

Philipia's heart dropped to her stomach. She felt sick, nauseous in fact. Martial's mood had never been bad before; she'd always thought that was a good thing. But now it seemed to be the only way he could express his emotions and frustrations.

Her heart began to race so fast it was hard to even breathe properly. What happened after she went unconscious? Who made Martial so furious?

“Brother... I”

“Will you or will you not go? It's only two choices, choose one, Philipia.”

Philipia's lips trembled. She held her tears back as much as she

could and nodded, acquiescing to his words.

Martial's bad mood lightened. He placed the can on the counter and kneeled at Philipia's height. “Don't be sad little sis, this was meant to happen sooner or later. You should be grateful, I didn't even stop you from betraying me and even siding with those bastards—cause I love you. You know that right? I love you so much,” he said, rubbing Philipia's lips with his thumb. His eyes couldn't help but deepen as he stared at those pair of lips. “I love you so much, sometimes it's sickening.”

Philipia can smell and taste the gunpowder. It made breathing even harder.

“So, be good and attend the party. After that, you and I are gonna play a game,” he said and leaned close to Philipia's ear which made her shudder, “a game where one has to bet on their life.”

Martial's eyes glowed, and his smile was beautiful; it lit up his face like the sun. His laugh was pure joy, and he had such an infectious way about him that everyone loved being around him. He could have been a movie star or a model in any country you wanted to mention—and yet here he kneeled, covered in blood, his expression was the opposite of his words.

Martial leaned away and gave Philipia a soft kiss on her forehead before leaving.

Philipia picked up the crab that was still bumping on her legs and placed it on the other side. The crab didn't know what happened but it resumed its walk.

Iceland took her hand and squeezed it reassuringly. “It'll be fine,” he said yet his trembling hand betrays his words of comfort. He wasn't just comforting her, he was comforting himself too.

Philipia didn't want to expose him but allowed him to hold her hand. Every day, she was scared, thinking it could be today, later, or maybe tomorrow Martial starts the war. Every day she was having anxiety and stress, she didn't have anyone to talk to or anyone to ask for help. She was afraid she'll hurt South if she went

to him or maybe he will not want her anymore because of what happened in her past.

She didn't want that! She didn't want to be hated! So she could only muster up the courage and warn China about what was to come. Of course, as expected, he was afraid as Philipia. Knowing war is about to happen yet you can't know when, it's like knowing the answer but not where to write it.

Looking at all these ignorant people, she felt an overwhelming feeling of sympathy. At least they'll die without knowing anything —They don't have to know anything.

For the first time in a while, staying by herself in the house made her feel suffocated. But, she had to admit that the feeling was probably due more to anxiety than loneliness. She had planned to relax, even just a bit, but unexpectedly bumped into Iceland, whom she hasn't seen in a while.

Unlike South and the rest. Her feelings for Iceland were complicated. He neither likes nor dislikes Filipia so she didn't feel uncomfortable when she was around him. And he's also very quiet and has a reserved personality that makes it easy to talk with. She can be herself around him without worrying about what others would think of her. But at the same time, there's this sense that they're not on equal footing. She feels inferior when he's around. Because his status is much higher than hers. They didn't have any sort of relationship because of that. On the other hand, she doesn't like him enough to get close to him as well.

It was hard to explain why, but she felt like he might reject her if she got too close. But now, things are different. There's an intense emotion between them that comes from their shared pain.

“When will the party start?” Iceland asked.

“Tomorrow at night...” Philipia replied.

“Do you have something to wear?”

Philipia thought of the dress that Martial sent. “I do... I have a dress

to wear.”

“Is someone gonna fix your makeup?”

Philipia thought back to that time France did Filipia's make-up for their spring party. “No,” she said, “there's no one to fix me...” She couldn't tell if it meant herself or something else.

Iceland looked at her. “I can help if you want.”

Philipia shook her head and declined his offer. “It's okay. I can manage.” She plans to wear a mask, wearing makeup would just be pointless.

Iceland no longer insisted and nodded in understanding. Good luck and... I hope we could still talk, in the future.

Iceland left and Philipia remained seated on the sand. Her phone was on her lap. There was a group message open that she'd been ignoring since they arrived at the beach. She didn't know what to do or how to feel and just wanted it all to end, but then again, she wasn't sure if she wanted it to be over either. Looking down at her phone and reading their messages, Philipia felt complicated emotions before it slowly bubbles upwards and felt sad.

Suddenly, there was a drop of water on the screen, Philipia immediately thought of the rain so she raised her head, expecting to see a gloomy, gray sky. Instead, she felt a trickle on her cheek. It was just her tears after all.

She wiped her eyes and looked up. The clouds were bright and blue and the sky above her was clear.

“There you are, I've been looking everywhere for you.”

A shadow cast against Philipia. She looked up and saw a man with a soft temperament, his eyes were gentle like a spring breeze, but the look of him made her heart beat faster as he took hold of her hand in an attempt to comfort her. His touch was so light that she could hardly feel it—yet at least she felt something, even if only for a moment.

“Your tears keep falling like raindrops,” he said, the liquid falling one by one on his palm. “Why are you here? By yourself? Looking so defeated and alone?”

Laos looked at the female leader with sympathy. Even from afar, he could feel her pain and suffering. Her whole body, bent forward, sitting alone in the cold sand, was engulfed in overwhelming sadness that Laos felt like crying.

Such a small back carrying a thousand weight. It's even more painful when you realize she's all by herself.

Alone... By herself.

Looking at his palm catching her tears, it felt like it was pieces of her heart. One by one, they drop one after another.

“Don't cry...” He said, almost like a plead. “Today's reading isn't good. Such beautiful weather, the sky is as blue as your hair yet it is as blue as your mood.”

“Why are you... here?” She asked.

Laos smiled. “I was sent to pick you up. Come on, we still have to get ready.”

Laos takes both of her hands, intending to help her get up. But Philipia remained seated, she stubbornly refused to leave. Laos sighed, “Philipia, we have to go.”

“I don't want to, I don't want to attend the party.”

“Then what do you want to do? Your name's on the list now, if you don't attend, it'll be disrespecting the whole organization.”

Philipia yanked her hand back and curled into a ball. Laos couldn't help but think she was acting like a spoiled daughter who wouldn't listen to anyone. Laos thought for a moment when he suddenly had an idea...

“Philipia, look,” he said.

Philipia looked up and was startled by a flashlight light.

‘Click’

There was the sound of a camera.

Philipia blinked a few times before standing up and reaching for Laos' phone. “Give it to me!”

Laos held his hand up, “you'll have to reach it first. If you don't, I'm sending everyone your picture.”

Philipia froze and puffed up her cheeks. “I'm not playing, Laos!”

“So am I! Come on! Get it! Come and get it!”

Philipia was successfully taunted and hurriedly ran up to Laos, attempting to jump and snatch his phone away. The moment Laos saw Philipia running toward him, he smirked and bent down, wrapped his arms around her, lifted her, and placed her on his shoulder as if he was carrying nothing but a sack of potatoes. It all happened so fast, Philipia was caught off guard.

“Ah!! L-Laos! What are you doing?!” she exclaimed, her legs swaying in the air, a few pieces of sand scattering from all her movement.

“Behave. We have no time.”

Laos began to run while carrying a female leader on his shoulder, he made sure she was comfortable and that she wouldn't feel sore afterward.

A kid from afar looked at the weird man(Laos) carrying a pretty lady(Philipia) and couldn't help but run towards their mother for safety. It's the boogeyman their mother warned them about!

Philipia struggled at first but gave up after a few minutes. She looked at the view from behind and saw the weird and concerned looks of the people and felt an immense amount of shame. “Le-let me down,” she pleaded.

Laos shook his head. “I'm sorry, Philipia, but we need to get moving. Asean was the one who asked me to pick you up.”

Philipia was quiet for a moment, “Why? Is it because of the party?”

“Haha, no. Asean is more than that. He sent me to pick you up because he was concerned. He was worried about you.”

“I barely know him. We've met twice...”

“I know. That's why he's worried. Anyone a part of his organization is like a child to him.”

“I don't care...”

Laos stopped on the side of the crosswalk. He looked at the blaring red light. “It's fine. As long as he can see you and you're doing okay, that'll be enough for him. Asean used to have a daughter, but she died from depression which Asean didn't know she had. At that time, he was a young and ambitious leader. But after the death of his daughter, he realized that life is as precious as death. He no longer worked day and night, he accompanied all the leaders under his care. Even the rebellious Vietnam and stubborn Singapore. Even if they all pushed him away, he was still right by their side and made sure they have someone they can talk to when they were feeling down. He did the same for me... Can you believe I wasn't what I am now before?”

Philipia didn't respond, but Laos knew she was listening. This was one of the things he noticed about this leader, she was a good listener, and that's why a lot of people, like him, would easily let their guard down and express their feelings to her.

“I used to be an irresponsible leader, despite knowing the circumstances my people are going through, I let it be. Because I didn't care and I didn't want to be a leader in the first place. I'm lazy and didn't want to have any type of burden. I just want to be free and left alone... to the point I'd kill myself for it.”

The light turned green and Laos crossed the pedestrian lane. “That was when Asean came and saved me. It's a bit personal and a bit

chaotic so I wouldn't tell you in detail, but long story short, I was enlightened. I had to force myself and govern the country I didn't want in the first place. Afterward, I became a believer, I found my passion in tarot readings and had been doing so for the past hundred years."

Laos resumed his running after crossing the other side of the road. Holding onto Philipia's legs and waist to prevent her from falling. "Moral of the story is don't give up."

Philipia pursed her lips. "But I'm tired."

"It hasn't even started yet, why are you already tired?"

"Cause I am... I'm tired Laos, I want to just lay down and do nothing."

Laos laughed, his voice was light and slightly panting. "Me too, I want that too. But what can we do, we were born to be leaders. The moment we came to this world, the world's responsibility fell on our shoulders."

Unknowingly, trails of tears followed after Laos. The tears sparkled as they were reflected by the light of the sun before falling to the ground. "I wish I wasn't a leader, I wish I was born normal."

Laos asked, "If you were, who would Vietnam keep talking about day and night? Who could complete the 'rice gang' Malaysia and Indonesia kept bragging about? Who would disturb Singapore's mind all night? Who would make Brunei feel all sorts of emotions in just a simple touch?"

Philipia replied, "Not me. It wasn't me. It was Filipia who did all those things."

Laos chuckled. "Then, who would help Cambodia find his dorm? Who would I be carrying because we're late for the party?"

This time, Philipia didn't reply.

"I heard about it, about your alter. You're scared you're forever in the shadow of your alter, of the other you. You can't fully express

your real personality, because that wasn't the ‘Philipia’ they knew. You grew conscious and insecure. But that's okay, that's a very valid reason to push people away. But don't push the people who are willing to know who you are, Philipia.”

Laos heard a muffled sob. “I'm sorry”, she whispered, her voice hoarse and scratchy as tears poured down her face in earnest this time. "It's just... I don't know what to do..."

It was all too familiar for comfort now, but it made Laos want to cry along with her.

Laos finally stopped. He gently puts her down, held her wrist, and pulled her somewhere in the most quiet part of the city. She didn't resist. It was almost like she was waiting for it to happen. Not even a single word from him. But then, he doesn't have to say anything.

His actions were enough.

"I need you to do something." He said.

She looked at him without saying a word.

"The moment I turn around, I'll introduce myself and you'll do the same." He continued.

Her eyes widened when she heard that.

"introduce?" She asked.

He nodded. "Yes."

Laos took a deep breath and turned around. The moment he saw Philipia's face, he smiled and bowed. “Pleasure to meet you, my name is Laos. How do you do?”

Philipia looked at him in shock. She was in a trance for a second before she hastily bowed as well. “P-pleasure. I'm Philipia...?”

Laos chuckled and patted her head. “With this, we're officially an acquaintance. From now on we're friends.”

Friends?

Did she make a friend? Aside from South, she made another friend by herself.

Philipia's eyes glittered in pleasure. The dim eyes were suddenly injected with vitality. It was so beautiful the sight of her face lightened by some secret joy, she did not want to spoil. Philipia forgot everything and looked at him. The sun seemed to shine more brilliantly on his face, which had never been so lovely as now. He smiled gently, but she could feel a glow of happiness and contentment inside her like a little flame. She knew that he did it for her even when she was nothing to him. Her heart leaped within her, and all the while Laos' smile grew larger and brighter.

“Yeah. You're my friend now,” she said, carefully reaching out to hold his sleeve, “Laos is my friend now.” As if a dam broke, Philipia suddenly hugged Laos, and Laos readily opened his arms.

At first, she giggled like a child who finally got her wish, but her giggle and laughter slowly transitioned into muffled sobbing then turning into full wailing. While crying, she said in-between sobbing, “Brother is planning to kill everyone! After this party will be the time the war starts! I can't lose you all like this, I don't want to see you all before a tragedy happens! It hurts so much Laos, I couldn't breath...”

She said everything she had to say to the point of incoherence. She spilled everything she had to spill. The dam which was filled to the brim, broke.

Laos listened to her problems as he hugged her tight. Only God knows how much she kept inside, how much she refused to say her thoughts out loud. He can see himself through her eyes. Laos couldn't help but cry along with her all the while brushing her hair, rubbing circles on her back. It felt like he was comforting himself, his younger self. With how much hatred and anger he kept in his heart, with nowhere to vent, he could only self-destruct.

Fortunately, he wasn't too late.

Vietnam walked back and forth at the entrance, muttering something under his breath. ‘Where is Lotus?’, ‘Lotus isn't here yet, could it be something bad happened?’, ‘It's Laos, she'll be fine, since Asean asked for him, which means he'll be able to pick her!’, ‘I wonder what she's wearing. Anyways, she looks good wearing anything!’

Singapore was so annoyed he slapped the back of his head. “Your muttering is as loud as a fly!”

“Owww!! Asean! Singapore hit me! Asean!!”

Singapore flinched and grab the back of Vietnam's collar. “He's choking me! He's choking me!”

“Are you seriously snitching me on Asean?!”

“Aaaahhhh!!!! Asean!!”

“You two, behave yourselves.” Laos walked up to them, wearing a modern style of his traditional clothes. It looked elegant and classy.

Vietnam beamed. “Laos! You're here! What about Lotus?”

Philipia, wearing a mask Laos bought for her and the black veil South bought for her, peeked from behind Laos. Social interaction is scary.

Vietnam easily escaped Singapore's grasp and instantly arrived beside Philipia. “Lotus!” he called and looked at the dress she was wearing. It was a dark red dress with a slit. It had sleeves but it was a black see-through lace which complimented well with the black veil styled beautifully on her sky-blue hair.

Vietnam couldn't hold himself back from exclaiming in awe. His eyes glittered from infatuation. “Lotus! You're so pretty!!!”

Laos immediately protected Philipia behind him. “Vietnam, we talked about this,” he warned, “You know she's not...” he signaled with his eyes.

Singapore snapped out of his stupor and dragged Vietnam away

from the collar. “Ahh! Let go! Let go you money-grubbing lio—oomp!!! Hmnmp!!!”

Singapore covered Vietnam's mouth and said, “Apologies, country leader Philipia. My colleague had too much wine.”

Philipia looked at poor Vietnam, struggling to remove Singapore's hand covering his mouth and nose, the only passage for air. Tears filled his eyes as he looked at Laos for help.

Philipia didn't say anything, she continued to hide behind Laos.

Laos smiled and said while habitually twirling a tarot card in his hand, “It's fine. Where's Asean, I have a matter I want to discuss.”

Singapore's eyes couldn't help but move to the youth hiding behind Laos. He could see the red dress and some strands of her hair peeking out.

“He's in the third booth on the second floor.”

Laos thanked him and held Philipia's hand as he guided her inside. Vietnam had long lost consciousness in Singapore's arms while his(Singapore) gaze followed after Philipia until he could see only her small back, curled up dependently on Laos' back.

“Haaa... It's sad to see her gone but, at least she's okay.” He looked at the unconscious Vietnam and carried him over his shoulder, “Give up Vietnam. Our marks disappeared already, which means she's gone. Let us all start over again.”

The splendor before her eyes left Philipia breathless, the center of the hall where she stood, which was called the Hall of Remembrance, was a circular space containing ten pillars that reached for the sky. The columns were tall and made from marble; they had been sculpted to resemble their national trees in full bloom. Their leaves were formed into elaborate patterns, while their trunks bore the carvings of men and women holding swords or spears. Atop each pillar was a statue depicting a weapon, their country's weapon. Philipia found her own pillar and saw a beautiful and detailed sculpture of a Narra tree and the weapon on top is a

Kampilan.

“It's your first time seeing it, right?” Laos said. He looked at Philipia standing in the middle of the hall, wearing a beautiful fiery red dress. The chandelier on top gave an illusion as if he was in heaven.

“Yes”. She replied, still staring at the pillar. "I... I'm not sure what to think about this place..." She muttered quietly.

Laos smiled and walked closer to her. "You don't have to worry. I felt the same thing my first time here."

She nodded and then turned around to face him again. "Are you sure?"

He nodded happily. "Absolutely! You'll see that it's even more intricate up close..."

The two of them stood there for a few more minutes before they heard footsteps coming from behind. They turned their heads in surprise when they saw someone enter the room; a man who seemed to be around his late forties or early fifties, wearing gold-rimmed glasses.

“I'm so glad you've come, Philipia.” Asean gave her a kind smile.

Philipia didn't realize when she had let go of Laos. She wasn't used to not holding anything so she hurriedly went to his side and held his clothes, very dependent and very trusting. Laos sometimes feels like he's doing something wrong and kidnapped an innocent person.

Seeing her actions, Asean laughed heartily. “Laos, you've finally become a man!”

Malaysia and Indonesia heard the commotion and saw Philipia. Malaysia was about to greet her but was stopped by Indonesia. He whispered something to her and Malaysia's expression turned solemn. He sadly looked at his wine glass and sighed.

Indonesia patted his back.

All of these were seen by Brunei. It seemed like they finally

understood. He swirled the cocktail and stared at his reflection in the clear liquid.

Laos laughed. “Asean, you've got it wrong. Philipia and I aren't in a relationship. She's just nervous since it's her first time attending this kind of thing,” he explained, “also, I have something I want to discuss.”

He whispered a few words and Asean's expression dimmed, even so, he gave a reassuring smile to the others and asked Philipia to stay for a while. Philipia didn't want to be separated from Laos, but Laos patted her head and told her, "Don't worry, It'll be fine."

Philipia nodded in agreement to that and released her hold from his sleeve. Seeing her obedient manner, Laos felt bad leaving her alone. He was about to change his mind, trying to think of what to say when they heard someone coming down the stairs.

It was Brunei. He walked over with a cheery look on his face. When he saw the group, it seemed like something changed within him, though no one could tell what.

Brunei took in the situation and then said, “I'll take care of her,” he said, placing his hand on her back. Philipia visibly stiffened, jumping from his touch.

He looked at Phillipia and said to her, “Come on, I'll tour you around.”

Philipia gripped Laos' sleeve, shaking her head in refusal. “Brunei, I think it's best to let her be, I'll take her with me.”

Yet Brunei demanded in taking her, “You have something important to tell Asean, right? Leave Philipia to me.”

Laos felt like there was something wrong. He immediately grasp Philipia and hid her behind him. He looked at Brunei and raised a question, “Why are you forcing someone who doesn't want to talk to you?”

Sensing something was about to happen, Asean immediately interceded. “Now, now, let's not fight,” he said and faced Brunei,

“Philipia doesn't seem like being with anyone other than Laos right now, don't force the young lad.”

Brunei was indignant and insisted, “Why? Did you do something Laos? Did you poison her mind, brainwashed her?”

Malaysia and Indonesia were closer to the group and saw what was going on. “What's with Brunei?” Indonesia whispered.

Malaysia shrugged and worriedly glanced at Philipia. “I don't know, he must've had too much cocktails.”

“Philipia... looks scared.” Indonesia cared less about what was happening between Laos and Brunei, he cared even less about what medicine Brunei consumed today to start acting like a jerk. His main concern was Philipia. While the two were bickering, Philipia buried her face on Laos' back, hoping it could hide her, and make her invisible.

Indonesia couldn't hold back and was about to intercede when Philipia raised her eyes and looked in his direction. Even through the mask, he can tell, she didn't need his help.

That's right, he still has a job to do. Indonesia gave a subtle nod and stepped back. “You're not gonna do anything?” Malaysia was surprised. In this kind of situation, Indonesia would've dashed towards them, intending to help, wanting to appear manly and dependable in Philipia's eyes.

“Philipia's okay.” he said, “Besides, we still have something to do. We can't lose our focus here.”

Malaysia saw his serious and determined expression and couldn't help but be affected. “Don't you think it's nuts?”

“At this point, it's the most normal thing now. All we could do is trust ourselves.”

Laos was speechless at Brunei's accusations. “Brainwash her? Are you hearing yourself right now? I thought you, of all people, would understand Philipia's feelings.”

Listening to those words, Brunei couldn't rebut back. He glanced at the hiding female leader, and softened his voice as much as he could, “Phil... it's me, Brunei. I know you're not the other Philipia that everybody knows, I know you're someone else. I just want to talk.”

Laos snickered. “With whom? the Philipia standing in front of you or the Philipia who remained oblivious of your feelings till the end?”

Brunei narrowed his eyes at Laos, his mouth opened, and answered, “The Philipia who was supposed to be mine.”

Philipia, hiding behind Laos, kept her eyes shut as much as she could. She was yelling, in her mind, calling for someone, anyone, to answer her call.

‘Filipia! Please. Come out! Come out!’

Within her mindscape. A land with nothing but a sea of blood appeared. There was an altar as high as a building. Its stairs lead to a sacrificial table where Red lay asleep. His whole body was covered in blood and scars, all of his orifices were bleeding, and the blood was flowing endlessly. It's hard to imagine this sea of blood belonged to this young man. But not far from the altar, there's a cross. A cross was as high as three stories. On the cross is a young lady, almost the same replica as the young man on the altar. The lady, dressed in white with flowing midnight hair, swaying in the wind, and nailed.

Her palm and feet were nailed like Jesus Christ on a cross, around her head is a headdress made of steel wire with blooming sampaguitas as adornments. It was a breathtaking scene. The lady's face was clean with no blemishes. Her lips formed into a soft smile, her eyes closed, and her expression as peaceful as someone sleeping.

‘Filipia! Wake up! I can't take it! Take over, please! They want you, not me! They want you back, they don't want me!’

Suddenly, Filipia's eyelid twitched. Something was waking her up

but she refused. As she was about to open her eyes, releasing those brilliant gems hidden within, a voice hushed and reassured, “Shhhh... it's okay. You don't need to wake up.”

It was only then, Filipia went to sleep again.

Maharlika, covered in cracks like a broken mirror, smiled. He walked away and left the door belonging to Red and Filipia. The twin alters that was born together at the same time.

Maharlika looked at the hallway, the space in Philipia's mind. None of the alters were waking up, he couldn't even wake up Mauve when Philipia needed her most. The entrance to their exit was blocked. Philipia couldn't get in and they couldn't get out. Although he could hear her voice, she can't hear theirs.

Maharlika could only continue to wait, hopefully, Philipia could remove the shadow in her heart.

Maharlika held his aching chest, his left arm had completely disappeared. Due to Philipia's emotional instability, his body was affected and may cease to exist. That can't happen, he watched Philipia grow up, he saw all her suffering, her pain, and her happiness. He didn't want to leave her life.

Just a bit more. Let's endure it a bit more, Philipia.

In reality. Only a few seconds passed. Brunei was still waiting for Philipia's answer.

“Phil, please. I know you're there!”

Philipia covered her ears. She didn't want to hear a thing, she didn't want to hear anything!

“I need to talk to you, please!”

Singapore frowned and couldn't help but approach the group. “Brunei! Stop this nonsense. you're embarrassing yourself.” He reprimanded, gesturing him all the guest that was invited. Their eyes were looking in their direction, watching the play that was happening.

Laos also noticed the crowd had increased. He removed his suit, placed it on Philipia, and pulled her close to him, “Asean, let's talk upstairs.”

Asean nodded before he reassured the guest while Singapore pulled Brunei out of the way. His eyes not straying from Philipia's direction.

Asean appeased the crowd and snapped his fingers, cueing the orchestra to play and the stewards and attendants came out and served another batch of food, wines, and desserts. “Please, enjoy, the feast and hour of blessing will soon commence before the clock strikes 12, in the meantime, help yourselves with the food and our best wines opened for this special occasion.”

Laos and Philipia climbed up to the third floor and went to a private room where the steward led the way.

“Are you okay?” Laos asked, removing his suit from her head and placing it on her shoulders.

Philipia nodded. Her heart was finally calm after leaving the crowded place. She didn't even dare to raise her head or look around to see if all the guest's eyes were on them—After all, it was two leaders arguing with for one person.

Laos went towards the windows and closed the curtains one by one. Philipia watched his careful actions and felt a lot more secure. She fiddled with her fingers and couldn't help asking, “Laos, did you like Filipia when you first met her?”

Laos closed the curtain of the last window before facing Philipia. “I liked her because she was a good person, but I didn't romantically like her. I was simply intrigued and curious, but not necessarily in love with her.”

Philipia looked at Laos, staring into his eyes, and knew, he wasn't lying. “If it was me who you met first, would you like me?”

Laos habitually takes out a card from his chest pocket but realized his suit was worn by Philipia. He smiled and walked up to her,

inserted his finger in the pocket, and pulls out a card.

When Laos saw the card he pulled, his smile couldn't help but turn into pure joy. “Guess which card I pulled.”

Philipia tilted her head and guess, “Uhmm... The empress?” Philipia knows little about tarot cards but she knows a few names. The empress was the one that made an impression on her.

Laos shook his head. “Close, but wrong. If you could guess the card that I draw everyday, I'll tell you my answer.”

“Can't you tell me now?”

As Laos was about to answer, the door opened, and both of them turned around to see Asean walking in while instructing a steward. Asean saw the two leaders and signaled them to wait.

Laos nodded and had Philipia take a seat on one of the couches.

“Make sure to guard the door for me and not let anyone in, understand?” Asean instructed.

The steward gave a bow and closed the door. Asean breathed a sigh of relief and walked towards the two, “Philipia, dear, are you okay? You must've been frightened.”

Philipia shook her head. Sure, she was scared but Laos already pulled her away, she's pretty much calm now.

Asean saw her calm composure and was relieved. He felt useless earlier when he couldn't even help mend the argument. “I don't know what happened to Brunei, he's usually the calm and rational type.”

Laos took a seat beside Philipia and looked at Asean. “I don't know. Something felt off.”

Philipia looked through Filipia's memories and how Brunei never once acted like that. But Filipia's memories were unreliable now, and most of them were blurry and felt distant.

Nevertheless, she didn't want to ask him why, it was obvious he completely disregarded her(Philipia) and desired Filipia. But you can't help but empathize with the man. If one day her beloved suddenly changed and tells her they're a different person, she would've acted the same.

She would've wanted the reason ‘why’. She would've asked for an explanation. She would've wanted to talk to them one more time... And beg—not ask—but beg, for closure.

For a moment, she actually felt his pain. As though she felt the same thing... Or did she?

Asean was standing and talking to Laos when he noticed the difference from Philipia. He couldn't help but feel worried and kneeled to her height, asking, “Are you okay?”

Laos realized the youth besides him had gone silent. Her head was down and was shrouded in gloom. “Philipia?”

Philipia lifted her head and saw two, identical worried expression.

Philipia: “……”

This is embarrassing.

“I'm okay. I'm just feeling a bit hungry.”

Asean smiled helplessly. “My mistake,” he said and went to the front door and asked the steward for food.

Laos laughed and couldn't help patting her head. “Sorry, I'm not a good partner, I neglected you.”

Philipia didn't mind. After all, a lot happened the moment they arrived. “It's okay.”

When the food arrived, Philipia removed her mask. She placed it down on her lap, picked up the fork and took a bite of the cake. The sweetness melting in her tongue and her eyes brightened up a bit.

So good!!

Asean was amused by her expression. “Is it good?”

“Yes, it's very good.”

His eyes softened and couldn't help but look at the youth even more amiably. Like an elder who spoils their granddaughter.

Laos also ate, sometimes even feeding Philipia. The three were harmoniously getting along, meanwhile, Brunei went to a different room in a bad mood.

“What the heck is wrong with you?” Vietnam chased him followed by Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Brunei flung his suit and tie on the couch and ruffled his hair into a mess. “Get out!”

Vietnam wasn't the least intimidated. “What's up with you? Why are you in such a bad mood? We held ourselves back from talking to Lotus, yet you—the least expected person—actually barged into her and forced her to come with you?”

Brunei paced around the room, his mood becoming even more agitated. “I wanted to know... it's not fair,” he muttered, pacing back and forth, “She can't be gone, she can't just disappear!”

Singapore frowned. “You... You were in the Line with her, right?”

Malaysia's eyes widened. “Is it...”

Brunei breathes heavily, his eyes turned bloodshot and his marks glowed bright yellow and green. His mood was become unstable and his head was filled with voices he couldn't identify.

Indonesia cursed under his breath and pushed Brunei to the floor and lock his hands behind him. “Go get Asean!” He shouted.

Vietnam watched Brunei becoming erratic while being held down by Malaysia and Indonesia.

Now it made sense.

“Brunei... You've fallen way too much. We all did...” Vietnam's tears fell and quietly sobbed at the corner while the rest of the leaders held Brunei down.

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I don't wanna be a lawyer anymore (╥﹏╥)

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Chapter 51 : Hour of Blessing

The room was chaotic, the bedding untidy. The carpet had been trodden in and out with great rapidity; a few crumpled sheets of paper lay here or there — all these shreds of evidence were plain to be seen that some violent excitement had taken place within its walls.

When Asean arrived, he had to call the leaders together into one group for an explanation: but when he asked them what they could tell him about this disorder, no one seemed able to account for it.

Brunei sat with his back against a wall and stared at the floor. He was not crying; he did not seem to be in pain or distress of any kind. But there were tears on his face—tears that had been shed by someone else.

Vietnam Looked at him with pity and turned to Asean. “Can you ask Philipia to see Brunei? She doesn't have to be alone with him.”

Asean looked at Vietnam and saw the earnestness in his eyes. Vietnam never asked for anything, the last time he asked Asean a formal request was a long time ago when he wanted to marry his lover, Lotus, for real. Of course, before the wedding even took place, Lotus disappeared.

“Is it the effect of the Line?” Asean asked.

Malaysia explained, “Brunei's probably the latter type where he'll go insane unless we fulfill one of his requests, otherwise he may never recover.”

Indonesia hissed as a steward bandaged his arm and shoulder. Even though he wasn't late and immediately handled the situation, he was still hurt and beaten. A man crazy in love can be terrifying. The look in Brunei's eyes was enough to give Indonesia nightmares for several weeks.

“Where's Philipia?” Singapore asked as he twist his hand. Brunei almost broke it when he was struggling. He even tore his gloves! Unbelievable, that was made with precious leather!

Asean replied, “Upstairs. She's with Laos right now, eating. She hasn't eaten anything on the way here and didn't have the chance to enjoy the meal.”

Vietnam looked down, his thoughts unknown. He had a lot to think about and not much time in which to do it; the night was ending, and the sun would appear on the horizon by now. It would be midnight soon—and then what? Would they try again tonight or wait until tomorrow morning? He looked at Brunei as ever. The man's face showed no emotion whatsoever and Vietnam found himself wondering if he could ignore him without feeling any guilt over doing so. Could one ignore another person with impunity when the other did nothing more than sit there staring out of eyes unblinking?

Perhaps, perhaps not... but surely, this man did not deserve some sort of punishment for what he'd done. And yet, how exactly were you supposed to punish someone like Brunei? Punishment wasn't something that came easily to Vietnamese people. The man was simply, madly in love.

For some leaders, the disappearance of the symbol when in Line can have different effects. The others wouldn't feel anything, although they'll feel unhappy or depressed for a while, it wasn't a big problem. Others would feel a lifetime of sorrow, their despair could kill them, and they wouldn't be able to work or go about their day-to-day life. But the rarest one was like Brunei, their mood often becomes dangerous, and they'll turn unpredictable and indiscriminately kill whoever is in their way, even themselves. It would take a long time for them to recover, unless the person, whom they chose to be in Line, fulfill one of their wishes. But it's tragic if the person died and they'll die as well. It's as worse as the soul collision; of course the soul collision's worse where you'll lose your senses, your emotions, and your feelings if something bad happens.

Vietnam looked at the leaders in front of him and quietly slipped

away, intending to look for Lotus himself. As he arrived at the stairs, two sets of footsteps resounded from above.

“What happened?” Just then, Laos came down with Philipia.

Vietnam looked up and saw the two. He wanted to run up to Philipia, fortunately, he was able to hit the breaks before he too makes a fool of himself.

Philipia saw his short but subtle action and couldn't help but feel bad. Was she too avoidant? After all, they didn't deserve such treatment, even though Filipia dumped them all on her. But perhaps this was her way of saying that she can trust them, and if she's ever in need of assistance, they're there to help.

But Philipia didn't want to depend on the people Filipia chose. Her way of thinking is way too different. Her(Filipia) perspective and thoughts on others differ from Philipia.

Vietnam replied to Laos, “It's nothing, I j-just wanted to get some fresh air.” There's no point in forcing her to fulfill someone's wish meant to be for someone else.

He's so stupid...

Laos knew there was something wrong. He wanted to ask more when Philipia walked ahead of him. She sauntered down the stairs, the fabric of her dress dragged on the floor and the steps, falling ever so gently. The sound of her heels clacking sounded like his heartbeat. Clicking with a rhythm.

Vietnam saw Philipia stepping down and standing in front of him. Vietnam opened his mouth, wanting to say something; but no words could come out—they wouldn't come out.

“Is Brunei, not okay?” She asked.

Vietnam closed his mouth and nodded. He didn't realize how his expression looked so distressing. As if tears were about to come out, he did cry, so there was still a bit of rogue color on both sides of his eyes.

Philipia had the urge to poke his cheeks but held herself back. She walked passed him and gave a weak knock on the door. Asean, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore all simultaneously turned their heads to the sound. Philipia felt her heart racing but still mustered up the courage and straightened her back.

Just imagine you're presenting a report... That's it, it's just a report. Philipia comforted herself.

Malaysia walked up to her, his face cheery and his walk casual. “Hello, it's such a pretty night for a pretty lady~ Do you need anything?”

Malaysia was aware so he didn't act like Vietnam and Brunei. This person was different, this was the first time they were meeting so it was natural they were unfamiliar to her.

Through the mask, Philipia looked into Malaysia's eyes. “I'm here because you need me, right?”

Malaysia glanced at the leaders behind him and faced Philipia again. “Well, we do. How did you know? Did Vietnam tell you?”

Vietnam, who just walked in, looked at Malaysia aggrieved. “No, I didn't.” He didn't say anything but simply nodded in answer. It was Philipia who found out.

Malaysia squinted his eyes at the Vietnamese.

“Where is he? Maybe I can help?”

This is what Filipia would do, right? Always there to lend a helping hand.

“It's fine, we can handle him ourselves, you don't have to force yourself,” Malaysia said, “and Brunei is not in the right state of mind, right now.”

Philipia glanced at Brunei inside the room. He leaned on the wall, sitting on the floor beside the bed. His neat suit was untidy and messy. His shirt was open, showing his chest and collarbone. His hair was ruffled but it gave him a look of danger that seemed to fit

him well.

“He doesn't look okay...”

Asean went to Philipia and reassured her, “It's okay. I've seen leaders who turned way worse and I was able to handle them just fine.”

Philipia looked at Brunei one more time and as if sensing her gaze, Brunei's hand twitched and slowly turned his gaze to her. They both made eye contact and for a moment, Philipia heard multiple voices screaming and yelling in her head.

They stayed like that for a second but Philipia felt like it was even longer than that. Was this perhaps what he was dealing with?

“Asean, he's not okay,” she said, “Brunei thinks it's too noisy.”

Asean looked at Brunei who was looking at Philipia. His gaze was scorching it made Asean concern.

As he was about to agree, a steward came running in and told him a few things. He gave a nod and sent them away after a few instructions.

Asean then faced the leaders, he looked at them one by one. “The Hour Blessing is about to start. Let us all go downstairs.”

“But, what about Brunei?” Indonesia asked.

Asean looked at Brunei being helped by Singapore and Vietnam. “Just act natural, helped him get to his pillar.”

The leaders all looked at one another before nodding. Philipia was held by Laos and pulled downstairs. “Are you okay?” He asked.

Philipia nodded. “I am. But, what is this hour of blessing all about?”

Laos explained, “Every year, each organization will have an hour of blessing. It's a formal event where the leaders will each share the power to strengthen our bond, as well as help improve our country. Your people know and feel your bond with them and make them

respond to you to show you their loyalty.”

“Was this was it was? The event my brother alwayattendsnd?”

Laos thought of the dazzling light whenever Martial stood on his pillar. “Yes. You feel it too, right?”

“I do. Every year, the whole country would glow and everyone starts to sing, even I couldn't help singing as well. Sometimes, I think our singing could be heard from outer space. It's such a noisy day every year.”

Laos laughed. “In my country, we dance every time they respond to my bond, they dance. Sometimes it causes traffic and even accidents, thankfully the blessing can nullify pain and sickness, and your people become immortal even for just a bit.”

“Does the light signify how many of your people respond to you and like you?”

They reached the first floor and every guest in the crowd turned their heads at the two leaders. Philipia couldn't help leaning close to Laos Every time they walk past a guest, they would bow and give them their blessing.

Philipia can even hear certain voices talking about her.:

“It's country leader Philipia.”

“The blessings today could be even more magnificent.”

“You have to respond properly to her blessing, alright?”

“Did you see how she looked at me? It felt like I was struck by thunder.”

“Never thought I'd get to see the day country leader Philipia gets to do the blessing for us. May the heavens be with her.”

Philipia looked around and saw, her own people, her own citizens, looked at her adoringly and expectantly. As if their putting all their trust and life for her. When she looked at them they all smiled and

gave her the sincerest bow.

Laos leaned to her ear from behind. “It signifies the loyalty and amount of love they have for you,” he whispered before walking towards his own pillar, his own people bowed down to him.

Philipia watched him go then saw the others come down. Their own people called out to them and bowed to them. Vietnam greeted the crowd for Brunei and made him stand on his pillar. Brunei's people all looked concerned and seemed to feel his low mood.

“H-hello!”

Philipia heard a familiar greeting that sounded a bit timid and nervous. She spun around and her head slowly raised till she felt like her neck cracked. A tall and robust man stood in front of her yet this robust man had a very friendly look on his face. Philipia can almost see a tail and a pair of ears.

“It's me, Cambodia. A-are you lost? Can you find your pillar? It's over there.” He pointed.

Philipia already knew and saw her pillar almost immediately the moment she entered the room. But this giant puppy probably thought she was lost and wanted to return the favor for what she did back then.

“Thank you,” she said and Cambodia glimmered. His smile was so dazzling it was as if the sun arrived, even though it was almost midnight. His eyes were filled with gentle light it made Philipia want to cry. It's almost as if she's looking at Filipia, she also had that same kind of smile.

It was as if he fulfilled his mission, Cambodia went to his pillar and stood under it, the smile never leaving his lips.

Philipia looked at her pillar and slowly made her way over. Her people all looked at her with reverence.

The crowd slowly dispersed and went to their designated country leader, standing beside them with their chest puffed up, showing how proud they are to be their people.

Philipia looked around and finally saw Thailand and Myanmar. They arrived at the party a bit late and apologized to Asean.

Thailand wore his traditional clothes and looked like the type that was easy-going, friendly, confident, and polite. Like the type you can ask for money and never pay it back.

Myanmar, following behind him, wore a golden suit with black linings. He looks so dignified, discreet, poised and generous, like someone you can easily invite for a coffee as long as it was Starbucks.

They all greeted the other leaders and when their eyes landed on Philipia, they looked surprised at first but gave her a polite and distant smile. Philipia wasn't close to them and this was the first time she's ever met them so it was only natural for them to be very formal.

When all the leaders were complete, the pillars all lit up when the clock striked 12. Philipia felt like her whole body was burning, but it didn't hurt, the burning sensation only lasted for a moment before it turned warm. Asean stood at the center, his eyes closed. She looked around and noticed that all the stewards and the guest kneeled on the floor, even if their dresses and suits were the most expensive type, they didn't seem to care.

Philipia also closed her eyes and seemed to have felt the instant connection she had with a millions of people. Suddenly, she felt a distant and weak connection with someone. That person didn't move, they didn't respond, but she felt a familiar feeling, it was as if that person used to be besides her...

The blessing ended, the guest all stood up and clapped their hands. The people around Philipia began to sing a folk song, a song that was burned and carved on their bones, impossible to be forgotten.

The hall became lively in an instant, it didn't look like a formal cocktail-type party, but instead, looked like a rowdy tavern. Wines and beers were spilled and drank, poured and cheered.

10 different ethnicities were mixed into one room, they all

experienced something worth celebrating, it was only natural for it to be chaotic. Philipia was also pulled alongside by her people, they all circled around her while singing. Someone even placed a flower crown and gave her a traditional Dragon mask.

Where did this come from?

Philipia didn't feel the least pressured but quickly switched her current mask with the new one. Laos took the old one and told her to ‘enjoy’. Once she wore the mask, her people clapped, whistled and cheered. She couldn't help but feel their excitement and joy for this wonderful blessing. The event just finished so she was still slightly connected to them and it was easy to be drunk in their happiness. She didn't feel nervous, scared, shrank her neck, or even hide away from their eyes.

How can she when it's glittering in pure joy, so child-like and innocent.

Philipia danced and sang along with the others. The whole room was filled with laughter, cheers and confettis were everywhere.

A man even danced with three different flags on his back, representing Vietnam, Philippines, and Malaysia. He must've been a mix.

Malaysia was even crowd surfing while holding a bottle of wine, he used a bread knife to open it and it made a splash, raining wine on everyone.

Indonesia and Cambodia held a mic and sang in two different language, of course Indonesia had to climbed on Cambodia's back and screamed at the top of his lungs.

Asean was dressed and covered in all kinds of flowers and attires, someone even inserted all kinds of small flags on his back. He was like a walking Christmas tree filled with adornments of 10 different countries. But he didn't mind. He allowed them to do whatever they want and laugher along.

Thailand used a scooter when going around with his people

marching on his back.

Myanmar on the other hand sat on a table while his people brought him all kinds of food, even giving him the whole chocolate fountain, which he gratefully accepted.

Philipia was suddenly pulled and was made to sit on floating chair that looked like a swing you see on a tree, or the one you'd play on a playground—of course the chair had wires connected to the ceiling. It wasn't just her, of course. The rest of the leaders were also given one and made to sit on the chairs. When they sat, they were asked to hold on tight and pulled upwards.

Malaysia had too much fun and swang back and forth, bold enough to even stand on it. Below them were their people, cheering, dancing and singing. It was like a chaotic festival, like a child just put whatever they thought was colorful and cool in one place.

Philipia looked down and almost forgot about that certain connection she just felt. Was this what his brother often experience every year? Does he also smile, have fun, dance and sing along? Can he also feel their happiness, their joy, and their adoration for him?

In the Philippines. Martial stood at the balcony, looking at the distant lively city. It was night but the lights were overwhelming, the country wasn't sleeping. In contrast, his house located far away, looked bleak and dark.

Martial extinguished the last cigarette.

“Mark,” he called.

Mark appeared from the dark inside the room, he kneeled and bowed his head. “Yes, sir.”

“Prepare yourselves. Make sure, every last one of them dies.”

“But our people...”

Martial looked at the colorful lights dancing at the distance. “Except them... take them away and bring them all home.”

Mark nodded and took a step back before disappearing once more.

“I hope you won't disappoint me Philipia... Make sure you'll catch me. Make sure you won't give up halfway...”

In a dark room, Japan watched the video Malaysia just posted. He watched him getting carried, showering his people with wine, and even dancing on a swing.

“This is so chaotic,” he said, but he knows the feeling, he can relate to Malaysia's happiness. If a million happiness was given to one person, of course they'd act like this as well.

He swipes upwards and saw Laos' post and saw Philipia dancing. His heart, that was as calm as the sea, missed a beat. He watched the video where she shone so bright, like a pearl. She sang and clapped among her people. He couldn't recognize what type of dance they were doing, but they were all in-synch. It's been such a long time since he last saw her, but she changed greatly.

She was even more dazzling as ever. Even brighter. Even unattainable.

A tear fell on the screen and froze the video on the scene where she was sitting on a swing, sitting in the air.

The mask she wore had many holes and design, he can see, from the angle of the video, she was smiling. Her eyes bent into cresents.

“Philipia...” He murmured. Suddenly, he heard the sound of a baby crying. He immediately got up and went to the next room.

There was a crib in the middle, a baby about a few months old, was crying and swayeing its small hands and short arms.

Japan bent over and picked her up. “There, there... Kyoto.”

When he went to visit Tokyo, she begged his brother to take her, but what she didn't know was that Kyoto was dead, so when he went to get his niece, he was carrying an urn. Tokyo was curious who it was, her personality was nothing like before.

Japan replied, “It's Kyoto...”

Tokyo looked at him in a daze then slowly looked at the beautiful urn in his hands. One by one, her tears fell.

She cried, but she didn't cry much. She merely said, “oh, don't worry, I'll see her soon. Is there anything you'd like to tell her? I'll pass it on for you.”

Japan fell on his knees with a thud. Tokyo calmly looked at his brother, weeping on the floor, hugging the urn as if it was his life.

In one day, he broke his Line with Philipia, carried his sister's ashes, took his niece and watched Tokyo die. She wasn't beheaded or hanged like the olden days, she was just given a dose to make her sleep, so deep, it'll be hard to wake her up. He watched them put her in a capsule, and burned her alive.

Japan went home, entered his empty house and asked the servants to take care of the two urns of their two Cities.

Japan went back to his room and sat on the chair. He wiped the tear off the screen, turned it on and resumed his daily scrolling on social media. It was the only way he can feel connected to their world.

The baby in his arms grunted, as if complaining. He hushed and properly held the bottle of milk. “You look like Kyoto but your personality's like Tokyo.”

Back to the Hall of Remembrance. Philipia hurriedly slipped away. Her energy was limited and she looked at the lively people with suspicion. How come they're still so full of energy?

Suddenly, Malaysia swings across the room and crashed into somewhere.

Philipia: “……”

Let's just go somewhere.

Philipia went to the bathroom to remove her mask and wash her

face. She did it quickly, as if she were afraid of being observed by anyone, even the servants. The water was tepid at best but it seemed to refresh her somewhat. She dried off with a tissue, put on her mask again, intending to return to the hall.

The music was still playing and everyone else had gathered around the dance floor now. Philipia was by the door and didn't want to go inside, so she turned to her heel and chose to walk around.

The whole place was like a giant maze. Stairs leading to who-knows-where, doors that contain nothing but an empty room, and even a room with only a chair at the middle, and someone must've thought it was funny, but they put a wig on an old naked statue.

Philipia ascended to the second floor and saw a balcony. Good, she wanted a breath of fresh air anyways, the balcony was the perfect place.

When Philipia opened the door, she realized there was someone there. Hurriedly, without trying to be too loud and obvious, she quietly closed the balcony door. Fortunately, the person didn't notice her. Philipia was about to sneak away when she felt something was wrong.

Wasn't that Brunei?

Philipia darted back just in time to see, through the glass, Brunei climbing on top of the banister, intending to jump. Her body moved before she could even think and hugged the man from behind and pulled him back.

“Don't!!”

Both of them fell, Brunei rolled on the floor and lay on his back, it was as if his attempt just now was nothing.

Philipia immediately went to Brunei's side and saw him unmoving. “Brunei!” She exclaimed and lightly slapping his cheek, shaking his body. “Brunei!” She called once more.

Brunei opened his eyes that felt so heavy. He saw the dark sky and the face of the person he kept thinking about. When he looked into

her eyes, all the voices that kept ringing in his head vanished. It was as if someone gave him a noise cancelling headphones.

“What happened to your face?” He heard his hoarsed voice ask. He brought his hand to her face and wiped the blood trickling on her cheek.

Philipia was confused at first until she felt a sting on her face. She looked around and saw the mask had somehow shattered and broke into pieces on the floor. It must've been when they fell, she did pulled Brunei with too much strength and was too focused on him that she didn't even notice her face was cut across her face.

“Ah... it broke, but I'm okay.” She reasurred.

Brunei's hand was still on her cheek. He wiped the blood that kept oozing out of her wound.

“It must've hurt...”

“it's not. Brunei, get up first, the floor is cold.”

Brunei closed his eyes again. “Leave me be.”

“I can't do that,” Philipia said, “Weren't you with Vietnam?”

Brunei tilted his head to the side and asked, “Do you pity me, Philipia? Is that why you're here? Am I that pitiful?”

Philipia didn't know how to answer his question. She can only remain quiet and sit by his side.

“I might do something bad to you, right now, my mood isn't stable. I might strangle you or even worse, force myself onto you. The effects of the Line on me is too strong I won't be able to stop myself.”

As expected, it was because of her—well, mainly, because of Filipia.

“Is there, something I can do?”

Brunei opened his eyes, but didn't look at the female leader. “I want

to talk to Filipia.”

Brunei heard her sigh and couldn't help but sneer. “You can't do it, can you? Or is it because she doesn't want to talk to me?”

Philipia pursed her lips. “I can't reach her. She wouldn't let me reach her. Even if I try, I can't reach or any of my alters.”

Brunei finally turned his head. “What do you mean you can't?”

“It means... I really can't. I wouldn't mind doing it if you want but I can't connect with them. I can feel Filipia but I can't reach her.”

“Then, can you tell me what she's feeling right now?”

Philipia looked at Brunei in the eyes.

“Peace. She felt at peace. That's what I think she's feeling.”

Brunei was disappointed, but it was better than nothing. “Peace... is it because she doesn't have to deal with any of us?”

The blood trailed down to her chin and to her lips. Philipia causally wiped it off with the back of her hand while saying, “Perhaps. She did irresponsibly left and I have to deal with you guys instead. She presumably thinks it's for the best, but I think it's too selfish. She left all of a sudden, I'd be mad too—No, I'm actually mad right now.”

Brunei looked at the youth who was clumsily wiping the blood off of her face while complaining. She wasn't like the other who would try to heal her body and stop the bleeding, she wasn't even the least bit mature like—whom she called, Filipia.

So her name was Filipia...

“Are you not going to heal yourself?”

Philipia paused and looked at Brunei. “Its not automatic?”

Brunei: “……”

Brunei sighed and sat up. He took a handkerchief from his pocket and handed it to her. “I understand, you're not Filipia. I accept that now.”

Philipia looked at the handkerchief given to her before reaching out to accept it. She used it to wipe off the blood and press on the wound to stop the bleeding.

“I'm sorry I took her away from you. I can tell how much you love her.”

Brunei gave a weak smile. “I loved her. But I hate her as well... it's a complicated feeling.”

Philipia watched him get up, dust his pants and shirt before looking at her. “That handkerchief, wash it before you give it back.”

“Huh? Oh! Right. I'm sorry.”

Brunei was amused. He didn't even realize that the voices finally disappeared. He finally accepted the fact that his beloved is gone. The weight on his shoulder and the pressing feeling on his chest was gone. It felt like he could finally breath, as if he finally woke up from a long lucid dream.

“Get up, it's dirty,” he said.

Philipia held the handkerchief on her face with her right hand and used the other to stand up. But perhaps of blood loss or she had been sitting on her legs for too long, she felt a little dizzy and wobbled to the side. Fortunately, Brunei was there and caught her, he placed his arm under her stomach, letting her hang on his arm like a weightless paper. He made sure to keep a distance and didn't touch her.

“Uhh...”

“Heal yourself already.”

“I don't know how. Filipia might know but I don't, I don't even understand female leaders.”

“Then how do you heal yourself?”

Philipia didn't answer instantly. “Uhhh... I wait?”

Brunei: “……”

Filipia never made him this speechless.

“You're really...”

“Ahh! Brunei!!!”

Philipia and Brunei turned their heads towards the sound and saw Vietnam at the door, looking at them in shock. He looked around the balcony and saw the weak and bleeding Philipia, messy looking Brunei, and a broken mask all over the floor. Just from this scene constructed all sorts of things in Vietnam's head.

“How can you do this Brunei?! How could you beat Lotus!?”

Brunei was rendered speechless, again. He hurriedly explained, “I didn't! Well, it was my fault but I didn't beat her!”

While talking, Brunei was moving and made Philipia, hanging on his arm, even more light-headed, the blood splattered all over the floor which looked gruesome for some people.

Vietnam gasped and ran towards Brunei, hitting him over and over, “Let her go! Let her go! Let her go! Ahhhh! Bully! You're a bully! Brunei's a bully!”

“Ow! Knock it off! I'm still hurt!” Brunei cried out while blocking Vietnam's punches that reminded him of a small kid defending against a bad guy.

“Ughh, I feel sick.” Philipia groaned. Before coming here, she drank too much wine that her people kept pushing towards her. It's ironic how her people could chug a barrel of beer like nothing yet here she is, their leader, getting dizzy and nauseous after drinking a couple of wine that has low alcohol level.

The balcony was chaotic as the hall. The three went back and forth

like this before the rest of the leaders finally found them.

Laos heard the commotion and came running to see a scene where Philipia was throwing up from the balcony, leaning on the banister while Brunei is being beaten(?) By Vietnam.

“What happened here?” Singapore asked while wearing five layers of flower necklace and six layers of flower crowns with a serious expression. Both hands holding a glass of wine, using the empty one to push his glasses that was stained with whip cream.

Laos replied, “I think something happened.”

Vietnam saw the two and cried, “Brunei bullied Lotus! She was bleeding all over her face because Brunei punched her in the face!”

Laos and Singapore simultaneously looked at Brunei in disbelief. Brunei hurriedly defended himself, “I didn't! I was about to jump off this balcony when Philipia came and saved me. She pulled me too hard and we ended up falling and her mask broke in the process! It was the mask! The mask hurt her! Not me!”

Vietnam still wailed, “Waahhhhh!!!! Lotus!!!! Waaahhhh!!”

Laos immediately went to Philipia's side and gently patted her back. “Did you drink too much?”

Philipia answered with a small “Yes” and throwing up again. Laos sighed but couldn't help laughing.

“You're weak to alcohol?”

“It doesn't feel good.”

Laos laughed even more while rubbing circles on her back. Brunei watched the two interact and felt a pang of jealousy, but he couldn't do anything. He can only watch and start over again. This wasn't the Philipia he knows after all, so he had to slowly and gently learn about this new Philipia.

“You tried to kill yourself?” Singapore came to him and handed him an empty glass of wine.

Brunei accepted the glasses in confusion but didn't ask. He answered, “It was the Line affecting me, I can still remember a bit, but now my memories all fogged up. I can't even remember how I got here.”

Singapore nodded and handed the other empty glass of wine to Vietnam who took it without asking while still crying. “Vietnam, you also drank.”

“I did not! Waahhhh!!! Domestic abuse is bad! Waahhh!!!”

Brunei: “……”

“There you guys are! We've been looking everywhere for you!” Malaysia leaned on the doorframe, watching the scene in front of him with amusement. “Alcohol is so magical, right?”

Suddenly Indonesia skates inside the balcony wearing a tuxedo hat and a cane, “I'm Michael Jackson.”

Malaysia burst out laughing, slapping his thighs while pointing Indonesia. “See?! I told you! HAHAHAHA!!!”

Indonesia was too drunk to even realize what was happening and continues to dance like Michael Jackson, he even attempted to do the famous levitation but ended up falling face first on the floor. Malaysia laughed even louder, making him lean on the wall and sliding down, and wheezing at the same time.

“Hahaha, kids, they're cute.” Asean said.

Vietnam saw Asean and saw his current appearance while gaping. “Asean! You've become a Christmas tree!!!”

Asean stood by the door with all kinds of ornaments hanging on him, there was even a pole duck taped around his waist and small flags were attached to it that makes him look like a walking Christmas tree.

Singapore nodded and gave him a thumbs up which Asean reciprocated with one. Singapore went to his side and gave him all his flower necklace and crowns.

Thailand and Myanmar then came, they looked more normal and didn't seem to be affected. They laughed at the group of leaders and took a picture and posted it on their social media.

Cambodia was the last to arrive. Although he was sober, he was teased and played with to the point he can only run away with tears hanging on his eyelashes. Someone even made him wear puppy ears and duct taped a tail. The tail wasn't even in the right place and taped it too high! Cambodia felt so aggrieved.

“Are you sure, you're allowed to post that?” Cambodia worries asked. This might destroy the image of a responsible and dependable leader the masses have.

“Oh shush, everybody knows how leaders are. They are just a bunch of adult babies.”

【**Thailandisnotgay**ⓥ: A beautiful blessing for all!! [picture] [picture] [picture]】

【**Myan_Daddy**ⓥ: Is this a tree? A man? No! It's **@Asean_see_u**ⓥ [Picture] [Picture]】

Cambodia looked at the two who kept taking pictures, posting it on social media one after another then looked at the chaotic scene.

Is this really... Okay?

———————

Vietnam: No to domestic abuse!

Brunei: He didn't do anything!(ﾟ□ﾟ)
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Chapter 52 : Gallery room

Philipia woke up with a splitting headache. She groggily got up and went to the bathroom to wash her face with a cold water. After what felt like washing five times, she finally felt a little clear-headed.

It felt like she didn't have the willpower to go on living. She fought the power to sleep for a moment before rubbing her face with a towel.

“Ugh, alcohol isn't for me.”

Philipia walks back in her room and almost stumbled on the dress that was thrown askew on the floor. She picked it up and dumped it in the basket for dirty clothes. She doesn't wear most of her clothes anymore, even the dresses that Filipia used to wear. At this point, it was all just piling up in the wardrobe and drawers.

She looked at the dirty clothes she's yet to wash. Even though she hasn't been doing anything, she felt exhausted just by looking at it.

Philipia went to the kitchen and made herself a quick breakfast and some coffee. Just then, her phone rang with a new message. Philipia picked up her phone while drinking her coffee and saw two messages from two people.

La_os: [Good morning.]

IamK-pop: [I saw the videos last night. Your blessings looked so fun! (╖ ωωω ╖)]

Philipia replied to Laos first, greeting back: [Good morning] and replied to South afterwards: [Video? What Video?]

IamK-pop: [This *link*]

Philipia clicked on the linked and she was directed to a social media app. As she was about to watch it, turning her phone horizontally,

an incoming call from an unknown number appeared.

[Unknown number is calling]

Philipia looked at the unknown number with confusion. She didn't immediately answer it and simply watched the call go on for about a minute before it naturally dropped. Maybe someone called her number accidentally? She thought and was about to resume watching the video when the same unknown number called again.

“Who...?” she muttered and hesitantly answered the call.

“Hello?”

There was no sound. Philipia looked at the screen in doubt, thinking she must've dropped the call instead of answering but saw she was currentl on call. “Hello?” she called again.

On the other side, she can hear something rustling and faint sound of someone breathing. “Who is this?”

Philipia was about to hang up when the caller finally responded, “Don't...” and the call ended.

Listening to the sound of the tone, Philipia was in deep thought. Who was that? She wondered and attempted to call the number back.

[The number you called is unavailable right now...]

The toaster sounded and the bread popped out. Philipia placed her phone down before transferring the bread on a plate. She was thinking about the phone call, although it was a short and weird exchange, and felt her gut telling her it must've been something important.

Thinking about the blessing that happened at midnight, Philipia finally recalled that certain connection that she had. That connection was so faint and so far away, as though hidden, and didn't respond to her bond. There were others whom she had a connection that were located in different parts of the world, but they all responded with great enthusiasm, as if joyful that they

could still be connected to her.

But that one connection, felt so familiar but Philipia couldn't remember when and where she felt that. She never felt this before, probably because she was the one responding and Martial was the one attending the party before.

Philipia looked at the bread on the plate and didn't feel like eating, she lost her appetite when she thought of the incoming war. Now that the party's over, Martial is definitely about to make his first move.

Why is she idle and not doing anything then? She should be moving, plan ahead, and make sure that nobody gets hurt.

She hurriedly placed the plate of bread in the microwave and dialed a certain number.

“Hello, I need to talk to you about something...”

Philipia hangs up the call and saw more messages from Laos and South. She replied to them and spoke with them for a while before casually washing and changing.

She locked the door of her house and went out. Philipia never thought she'd step a foot outside and observe her surroundings. She saw the children playing on the side of the street, the old grandparents doing tai chi, the fresh but cold early breeze, the chirping birds, the sound of cars and engines, the miscellaneous noises of street vendors and open aired shops, and the smell of freshly baked breads from the bakery.

Philipia stood among the crowd, almost blending among them. There was almost an illusion as if she was a part of them and that she was a normal commoner who didn't know the hubbubs and troubles of leaders, it was as if she's stepping on their world where she can die when she grows old, get sick, laugh and cry with no worry.

It felt like a dream.

“Excuse me! Excuse me!” A small girl came in front of her. “Spare a

change?” The child asked.

Philipia looked at the child. She had dirty brown hair and she wore a very simple dress. Her eyes were filled with hope, and her hands held something in them.
Philipia opened her purse. She took some coins out and gave it to the child. “Here,” she said while handing over the coins. “You go buy something nice. I'm sure you deserves this.”

The child smiled happily and ran towards an old lady, presumably her grandmother. The grandmother saw the child and patted her head before turning to Philipia and bowed to her. Philipia did the same and watched the pair disappear in the crowd.

Philipia watched them for a while before walking towards the station and rode the train to the academy.

She entered the institute and greeted the guard, whom she hasn't seen in a while, and ran towards the dormitory area. But along the way, she saw Finland and Estonia with Cosmos and Iran.

Cosmos saw her first. He nudged Iran with his elbow and waved towards the female leader. “Hello,” he greeted.

Philipia wasn't close to the four but she still politely waved back and walked towards them. Hearing the incoming footsteps, Estonia perked his ears and beamed. “Sweetheart!”

Philipia still felt uncomfortable being called a nickname that didn't belong to her. Finland saw through her discomfort and whispered a few things to Estonia.

Is it really okay to whisper in front of her?

Iran and Cosmos were much better. Iran looked at the youth with melancholy in his eyes. “How are you?”

Unlike Filipia, Philipia didn't know how to read sign language. But she felt like he was asking ‘how's the weather’ or something like that so she replied, “Good...?”

Iran nodded and smiled. His smile was serene and warm. Iran had

long accepted it, he knew about the fact that his Red rose was gone but that didn't change his feelings. For him, Philipia was Philipia. Whether it was an alter or someone else, even if he reincarnated or lived another life, he was confident he'd still fall for her over and over again.

Philipia saw his positive response. Good, she didn't messed it up.

On the side, Finland just finished telling Estonia about Philipia's condition which didn't take long. At first, he was shocked and somber that his sweetheart was gone, but that didn't last. He simply turned towards her and bowed, “I apologize. I was too disrespectful,” he said.

Philipia wasn't used to someone apologizing too formally to her so she was flustered. She didn't wear her mask today and thought it didn't matter anymore since her eyes lost their effects. But the group in front of her saw her blushing and shy look.

Estonia didn't know or see anything but he heard her flustered tone saying, “T-that's fine! You don't have to apologize! I'm the one who should applogize.”

Estonia couldn't help but feel like this side of his sweetheart—ah, wrong— his philipia, was so adorable. He smiled amiably and said, “No worries, let's just say we were both in the wrong.”

Finland raised a brow and looked at Estonia suspiciously. Since when was he this respectful? The way he treated the others were shit compared to when treating Philipia. Even so, Finland didn't speak. He didn't talk or say anything to Philipia. Since this person was different, then it means he shouldn't act the way he acted before. He'll pretend it's their first time meeting... Formally.

“Are you going somewhere?” Cosmos couldn't help but ask. “You can have an advance enrollment if you want. Ah, but the new policy states you have to pass the entrance exam.”

Well, she wasn't here to enroll... But Philipia didn't say anything. She nods in understanding.

Estonia added, “The admission is on the second floor, right hallway, South building. You'll see signs when you go in, it's normal to be lost on your first day here after all.”

Philipia knew most of the school's layout but she was still thankful. Looking at the four leaders in front of her, she couldn't help feeling touched. They treated her like a new person, like someone they've met for the first or second time. They weren't distant but they weren't close either. It was just the right amount, the same level of an acquaintance or colleague of the same status.

“Thank you,” she said and hesitate to add, “I h-hope I'll pass.”

People say that right? When having a conversation, especially if you want to appear polite, you'd say that,… right?!

Iran gave a smile and did a ‘Good luck!’ gesture. Cosmos simply nodded and said, “I was also nervous, you're not alone.”

Estonia laughed. “The exam's easy. Nobody has failed... Yet.”

Philipia looked at him and replied, “I see. Thank you. Also, Thank you, again.”

She each gave them a small bow and proceed towards the building. The three leaders, who can see, watch the youth walk away.

After a moment of silence, Iran slowly but enunciated, “Philipia's wearing... pants.”

Finland groaned. It wasn't an indication of annoyance or anything, but more like an admiration. “She looked so good in it.”

Estonia heard the two and couldn't help but be curious. He became eager to know what Philipia wore. “What do you mean?! What did she wear? What pants?!”

Iran clears his throat and said, word-for-word, “She wore a simple turtleneck. It was black. And she wore jeans, dark blue jeans. Her legs was really pretty, it was straight but curvy. There was a gap but her thighs looked nice and firm, it would probably feel good when you lay your head on it. And her butt—” his words were cut

off when Cosmos smacked the back of his head.

Iran whimpered and curled on the ground while holding his head. “Owwww.”

Even though Iran's description was cut off, Estonia was able to perfectly imagine it. “You need to read more books, Iran,” he said.

Iran was confused. What did reading have to do with anything?

Estonia felt his confusion and said, with all seriousness, “Your vocabulary to describe something is lacking! You must read the dictionary more!”

Iran felt aggrieved and disgruntled. He was just smacked in the head and now he wants him to read a book?! How cruel!

Back to Philipia. She pretended to head towards the admission when she's really just strolling around the campus. Her purpose for coming here was different, she's supposed to meet up with someone. She entered the North Garden located at the center and saw the tree that used to be Filipia's resting spot.

The garden was now covered in fences with all sorts of flowers planted that were yet to bloom.

Philipia stop in her tracks and turn around and saw small signages on each soil that has the name of the flowers. “Wasn't there a gardening club?” who were the members again?

“Speak of the devil and devil comes.”

Philipia snapped her head towards the voice and saw Greece, Italy, and Germany walking through the loggia, an outdoor hallway that connected the buildings. It was Italy who said it.

Greece glared at her and looked the other way. Philipia can feel his strong hostility, making her wonder who pissed him off so early.

Italy gaze at Philipia. His eyes couldn't help wondering from head to toe, scrutinizing the youth standing in the garden. He remarked, “I thought you didn't want to come back here because you're too

afraid to be compared."

Germany reprimanded, "Watch your words, Italy."

"Hmm. At least she wouldn't cry or complain to her relatives like the other one."

German frowned and warned, "Italy. You're being disrespectful."

Greece, at the side, mocked, "What's wrong? Weren't you the one who always obsessed over her? Calling her goddess and that?"

Germany felt a throb in his head. These two leaders were still talking about a serious topic, how come they turned into bullies? He stated, "That was before. And she's not Goddess." Germany then continued walking, leaving the two behind.

Greece scoffed, "Weirdo." He peeked at Philipia and saw her staring at him. He clicked his tongue in annoyance. "What are you looking at?"

Philipia immediately looked away. Pretending not to see anything. When Greece was about to follow after Germany, an owl came flying down. Greece whistled and lifted his arm for her to land, but when Athena saw Philipia, the owl turned at the last second and landed on the top of Philipia's head.

Philipia: "……"

Even if you're avoiding trouble, trouble comes looking for you.

The phrase suddenly appeared in Philipia's mind and couldn't help but peer towards Greece, who stood there with a look of annoyance and irritation. "Athena! Come here! That's not her!"

Athena hooted at him and turned around. Obviously not wanting to deal with this guy, devil owner!

Greece gritted his teeth and glared at the Philipia. "Don't you ever show your annoying face in front of me!" he exclaimed before walking away.

Philipia pursed her lips and looked at Italy who was still standing there. They both looked into each other's eyes before Italy indifferently walked away, as if her existence meant nothing to him. Although they listen to her when it comes to the plan, it is only because she's the only person who knew Martial best, and they needed information, that's all. They have a ‘I use you, you use me’ type of relationship.

Italy promised Kati to protect Filipia not Philipia, and Philipia's stronger, more firm, and more aware of everything that's happening, so there's no point acting too familiar.

Philipia lowered her head and thought how unpleasant it feels to be hated. No wonder Filipia did all her best to make them like her. She wasn't aware of it herself but she was consciously trying to make the people who dislikes her, like her.

Filipia could do it but Philipia can't. Not everyone can like you and the world doesn't revolve around you.

It was only then she felt the subtle weight on her head and found the owl sleeping comfortably.

Philipia: “……”

Somehow, she became a human bed for this pet. Animals are more honest and sincere with their feelings. Seeing Athena so dependent and trusting towards her meant that she still likes her, with all her owl body, hehehe.

Philipia left the garden and walked around the North building where she saw Arabia, Sweden, Poland, and Mexico. They were helping the students with their miscellaneous task while Poland and Sweden were helping with cleaning. Since winter ended, there were a lot of accumulated snow around the school ground and the school's cleaners can't possibly clean it all with how short staffed they are, so North Korea and China asked a few leaders who were willing and help with the cleaning.

Poland held a snow shovel with a huge and pure smile on his face. He looked like he was enjoying what he was doing.

Philipia stood from afar and felt the sense of isolation. She knew she didn't belong in their world anymore and that the past closeness were never meant for her.

Philipia glanced at Mexico who slipped and fell on his butt and was laughed at by everyone. He laughed along and was helped by Sweden who told him a few precautions. Mexico rub his hair, a few snows falling off and melting, wetting some strands of his hair.

He was about to resume his work when he felt someone's intense stare and accurately found Philipia.

Philipia didn't think she'd be found this wuick and felt like a stalker who was caught red handed. She panicked and looked left and right for a place to escape. But it was too late. Poland saw Mexico's dazed expression and followed the direction he was looking at.

“Phil—Philipia!” He was about to call her Philis! Not good, not good. He waved his hand as high as he could, afraid that philipia wouldn't be able to see him.

Philipia awkwardly waved back but didn't move. Her intentions were clear and she didn't want to come over and disturb them.

Sweden also stopped and looked at her direction, but he simply gave her a glance and resumed his work. His reaction was indifferent and distant, as if she was an unfamiliar person he never met.

Arabia watched Sweden for a moment before waving and greeting Philipia. Anyways, him and Philipia were never close from the very beginning.

“Come on, there's still a lot of snow,” Arabia reminded and the two leaders, Mexico and Poland gave Philipia one final look and carried on in their task.

Philipia saw each of their reaction and didn't feel much. She turned to her heel and continued on her way.

When Philipia left, Arabia saw Sweden's depress look. He teased, “Look at you, pretending not to care yet you really care.”

A tear fell and Sweden sniffled. “Shut up, I'm working! Look, I'm busy picking snow!”

“You're poking the snow, you're not picking up anything.”

Sweden threw the small twig at Arabia who avoided it and laughed.

“Leave me alone!”

Poland also noticed Sweden's indifference from earlier and wondered, “Why can't you just be honest with your feelings?”

Sweden turn his head and ignored him. Seeing his vehenement attitude, Poland shrugged and didn't force the pitiful leader.

Mexico on the other hand was focused on his task but his mind was wondering on Philipia. The others didn't see it but he did. Philipia standing all alone from afar, looking at them with sad and yearning eyes, as if she felt like an outcast.

He knew too well what the feels like.

He wanted to go and comfort her but he held back. There's eyed lurking in the dark and he can't be careless.

Philipia climbed the stairs to the second floor. She turned to the right and walked pass an open classroom with Greenland, Antarctica, Egypt, and Nepal. The classroom was filled with the smell of paint and varnish, as well as old newspaper.

The four leaders were on the floor, each holding a brush and wearing an apron. Egypt was singing an Egyptian song while Greenland sang alone with incoherent lyrics and out of tune. He didn't seem to mind and continued to follow along Egypt's rythm, completely inharmonious while Nepal and Antarctica were talking, the loud singing and annoying high pitch sonata were like static background noise that didn't effect them.

Greenland clapedp and sung praises to Egypt whose ego only increased.

Philipia didn't want to disturb them so she quietly sneaked passed

the classroom, silently crawling on the floor. The classroom has a window that can see the hallway so Philipia did it as quietly as possible.

When she successful sneaked passed the room, she breathe a sigh of relief and stood up while dusting her knees and hand. Philipia continued on.

One the way, she saw Iceland walking the opposite direction. Iceland saw her first. “You could've told me you'd come to school, I would've accompanied you.”

Philipia saw the dark bags under his eyes, “You didn't sleep?”

“I thought the entrance exam was hard, it was too fucking easy.” He complained while rubbing his forehead.

“How was it?”

Iceland replied, “It was like an IQ test and of course my IQ is high, but I thought—according to the school forum for students—the exam was extremely hard. This is hard? Are they morons? Seriously, I studied for nothing, I even advanced study the materials that haven't even been discussed yet.”

Philipia felt bad for the leader. “On the bright side, I'm sure you passed and you can enroll in the academy now.”

Iceland was resentful. He swore to find and beat that student who said that the exam was hard as an international test!

While the two were talking, America, Spain, and China came down from the third floor and saw the two leaders talking. America stared at the female leader with equanimity. It doesn't bother him as much anymore.

Spain on the other hand, quietly retreated. China asked him, “What's wrong?”

Spain replied, “I can't face her. I'm too ashamed.”

China gazed at Spain dispondently. “When was the last time you

two spoke?”

Spain could no longer remember. The image of Filipia in his head was foggy and blurry. Like a distant memory he can no longer retrieve. “Too long,” he replied.

The three of them returned their gaze to Iceland and Philipia. America couldn't help wondering, “Since when did they get so close? Iceland's usually cold and aloof. As if nothing interesting can catch his attention.”

“Iceland and Philipia were together when Kyoto died. Perhaps that incident created a shadow in them and gave them a connection. They both witnessed a tragedy. I heard Iceland visited J and asked to see Kyoto's urn before leaving.” China explained.

The two leaders talked for a while before Iceland left, heading towards their direction. The three of them hurriedly ran upstairs and hid, watching Iceland walk pass the staircase. He paused for a second and looked at the empty stairs in doubt. He was sure he heard voices from here, but it must've been his imagination. He shrugged it off and went about his way.

America breathed a sigh of relief and felt like he was hiding from someone who wasn't worthy to hide from! Damn, he felt so embarrassed. Fortunately he wasn't alone and two of the other power country leaders were here with him.

Philipia finally, after so many encounters (for some reason) she finally arrived. Philipia opened the door to an unused classroom and saw New Zealand and Australia sitting inside.

New Zealand got up and gave Philipia a hug. The hug was gentle, affectionate, as if it was the last hug New Zealand was ever gonna make. Philipia didn't feel disgusted nor did she feel repulsed from the sudden hug. In fact, she had the urge to hug back, cry, and bury her face on his shoulder. New Zealand even smelled nice like sunshine. It was light and comforting, it reminded Philipia of a safe place, a place where she can be away from harm. It was a pure and innocent feeling.

Australia helplessly sighed as he went ahead and closed the door for them, lest someone sees them. It wouldn't be good, especially for New Zealand.

Australia let the two have their moment before he finally felt like it was enough, “Ehem...!”

New Zealand looked at his brother with a glare. He was obviously annoyed being interrupted.

Australia raised is hands. He said, “hey, I don't mind your lover's little hugging moment, but it's just not the right time.”

Philipia heard the term ‘Lovers’ with New Zealand and couldn't help getting embarassed. She gently pushed New Zealand away with flushed cheeks and clarified, “We're not lovers...”

New Zealand let himself be pushed and heard her clarification. He laughed and his eyes softened to the point it was melting, overflowing with affection. “Hahaha, you're right, you are absolutely right,” he said.

The hell? Why does he sound like a henpecked husband? Australia looked at his brother at the side incrediously. He immedietly said, “anyways, we're bere according to your request, is there something we can do for you?”

Philipia snapped out of her stupor and solemnly nodded. “Yes. I would like to go to Mr. UK, there's something I have to confirm.”

After the party, Laos took her home and taught her something only leaders who attended the Hour of Blessing.

It is the skill to be able to feel a connection, a blood connection. It isn't really a magnificent skill other than being able to locate your own people and learn about someone's ancestry, and this skill had a limit and can only be used five times. Thus, only a few leaders... In fact, no leaders in this day and age care about someone's bloodline. They don't care if you have a mix blood or someone from your family is mix since it isn't a big deal for them when there's no such thing as ‘pure blood’ in this day and age now—except for leaders

themselves of course.

But this skill can only be obtained every year if they attend the Hour of Blessing whenever their organization host an event.

When Laos showed her how, Philipia tried it when she got home. He also mentioned that the person she wants to connect can only be accurately located if they respond to her call, and most of the time, they do respond and would happily bounce in joy. But if they don't respond, the connection becomes faint and it'd be hard to grasp their location. It's like trying to see through a thick mass of fog.

It was only after trying for the third time Philipia was able to get a glimpse of the place which she recognized when she saw the huge grandfather clock that was famous for the bell inside named ‘Big Ben’.

At first, she wanted to look for America but thinking of his and Filipia's past, it felt a little awkward. Also, she doesn't want to be called ‘Mahal’.

The second choice was Canada but due to his obsessive nature and paranoia, Philipia felt like she may never be able to leave once she went to him, also she can still remember that incident where he almost did her raw, outside, in the snow, in the cold!

So the only choices she had was Australia and New Zealand. Although New Zealand was part of the line and proposed to Filipia, he was more or less normal and sane than his two brothers snd Australia was a chill guy. Even through Filipia's memories, their interaction were small and short and he's often with his snake and animals more than his friends.

New Zealand and Australia heard her request and glnced at each other. Australia was curious, “I'm not saying no, but why do you want to go to dad's place?”

Philipia chewed the inside of her cheeks, hesitant to give him an answer. New Zealand saw her hesitation and pinched Australia's waist, saying with a reprimanding tone, “Does it matter? Do you need a reason to go to someone's house?”

Yeah you do! And also, ow!!??

Australia whimpered and pouted. He whined, “I was just asking, you didn't have to pinch me.”

“You deserve it!”

Philipia watch their interaction with great interest. No wonder she feels comfortable around them, they were relaxed and acted normally around her. They weren't on guard or distance like a complete stranger. Although she wanted to be treated as her and not as Philipia, she didn't mean they had to be so detached and stiff. It felt so forced and she feels apprehensive.

Anyways, it really doesn't matter.

New Zealand finished reprimanding his brother and turned to face Philipia, his expression immediately eased. “Don't worry, whatever your reason, we'll take you there. When will you go?”

Philipia was thinking of going tonight but remembered she still has something to do. “How about later? After lunch?”

Australia nodded, “sure, mate.”

“I'll send you the location where we'll meet to avoid suspicion.”

Philipia agreed and they separated by the stairs. She strolled around for a bit in the campus, going to the area where Filipia had the most impression, especially the gardens on all four building. When she got near the dorm, she stopped and hesitated to advance. She looked at the familiar and unfamiliar buildings with mixed and complicated feelings.

It's familiar because this was where Filipia lived and stayed, it's unfamiliar because it changed. There was construction ongoing with more buildings being added for the female students.

That's right, the two academy's about to be merged. The wall that separates the two genders disappeared.

Philipia thought of the uniform that was in her wardrobe, which

was now changed into blue, meaning, she wasn't an exception anymore. But who knows, maybe she won't be able to attend here, or maybe there wouldn't be any time to attend school at all because...

Philipia was in deep thought when she felt someone standing behind her. Seriously, wherever she goes, there would be an encounter of some sort.

Slowly, she turn around and came face to face with Third Reich or should she call, professor Third Reich.

“H-hello...”

Philipia avoided eye contact. Looking away and gazing at the flowers blooming from a nearby tree.

Pretty... Flower.

Third Reich wanted to get some fresh air before returning to his room when he unexpectedly bumped into Philipia with a sleeping owl on the top of her head. He hasn't seen this youth in a long time so his reaction was a bit slow.

“Hello,” he greeted back as he scrutinized the youth. Ignoring the bird on top, he felt as if her temperament made a drastic change. There was a bit of timidity yet brave air, as well as a hint of familiarity. This familiarity made him remember unpleasant memories, causing his casual and normal mood to fluctuate. And not in a good way.

“Move,” he said with a rather heavy and demanding tone, as if he was commanding a subordinate. The pressure around them dropped that Athena woke up and glared at the man, ready to pounce when she felt a dangerous air.

Philipia moved as he requested. “Yes sir, sorry sir.”

Third Reich walked passed her, giving her one last look.

When the man finally left, Philipia felt her soft legs and almost stumble on the ground.

What's with him?

Philipia trudged away from the dormitory area, lest she encounter USSR or Nato, or so she heard, he started working here alongside with Asean.

Philipia almost strolled the whole campus but still couldn't find the person she's looking for.

“Where are you... South?” She mumbled.

While looking around, she heard muffled voices from a distance. Philipia followed the sound, arrived at the very back of the Southwest building. The Southwest building had been left abandoned after it was burned during the Autumn Massacre. Although not completely destroyed, it was left unused for a long time, traces of soot and smoke still shows on the walls. Philipia thought it looked ominous and eerie from afar, but due to her curiosity, she investigated and searched for the source of the sound.

It was only when she was a bit closer that she heard, those muffled sounds, was actually someone moaning.

Philipia: “……”

This is awkward. Her left foot didn't even landed forward yet before she pulled it back and slowly retreated.

“Ahhh~~!!! Atlantis!!~ more~~!! Harder!~”

Philipia covered her ears and ran as fast as lightning, trying to unhear the words she heard. Hear no evil! Hear no evil! Hear no evil!!!! Did she sound like this when she and Martial... A burst of shame bubbled inside Philipia and her flushed face turned beet red a tomato can't compare.

South Korea was on the second floor library, leaning on the window with a look of boredom on his face. He played with the lollipop in his mouth, sucking, licking and biting. He was the only one in the library anyways and this was his favourite place. He can still remember when he and Filipia pranked Spain... Wait, was it Spain? Or someone else? South thought deeply before disregarding it.

Anyways, it must've someone unimportant for him to forget, what was important was him and Filipia and the kiss that they made.

Thinking of that soft touch of her lips, her body on top of him, her pure and natural eyes gazing his.

South Korea smiled, his whole mood just turned cheery and lively in an instant. Ahhh, his only pill of happiness.

South Korea was just thinking of Phi-the pill of happiness-lipia when he saw her downstairs. “Hmm? Did she come from?”

South Korea called for her, even waving his arms but his pills of happiness didn't seem to hear him when her hands were covering her ears with a face as red as a tomato. “Huh...?”

South Korea yelled again, even Athena, still on her head, turned to his direction and hooted at him as a greeting. South Korea was visibly confuse. What made his pill of happiness run away with such a look on her face.

“She came from the Southwest building right?”

There was a second of silence. South Korea processed what he witnessed and finally realized what happened.

“She came from the Southwest building!!!”

Philipia hasn't been staying in the academy so she must not have known that the Southwest building became Atlantis' love nest where he does his ‘regular meetings’!

“Don't tell me Philipia saw or heard something she shouldn't have!”

Hurriedly, he takes out his phone and dialed her number. It didn't take long for Philipia to answer and South Korea can hear her rapid breathing. She did just run like crazy.

“P-Philipia, are you okay?”

Philipia catch for her breath before replying: [Nn...Yes]

She was definitely gonna say ‘No’.

South Korea felt bad for his pill of happiness. He explained, in detail, about the Southwest building and how it should be avoided, at all cost!!! Philipia felt miserable. Why is she so unlucky today? First, she encountered almost everyone Filipia knows, then she was bullied by Italy and Greece, scolded by Third Reich(not really), and witnessed a live porn show.

Iceland was right, he should've been with her. She should've asked for his company to stroll around the academy... But the meeting with Australia and New Zealand was supposed to be a secret. She wasn't even sure if she was allowed to do such a thing, sneaking into someone else's territory without permission and brought the two sons—of the owner of the territory she was about to sneak into —with her!

She was simply looking for a beating!

Philipia had no choice but to straighten her back and walk with trudging steps. Anyways, she wanted to see South first before getting lunch... Or should she ask South out for lunch?

Philipia went under a tree for shade and nervously asked, “Uhmm... South, would you like to eat lunch with me?”

South Korea heard a rare invitation from Philipia and was ecstatic. “Sure! Where do you wanna eat? It'll be my treat!”

Philipia told him the place and sent him the location.

“Alright! I'll be there in about five! See ya!”

When they hanged up, South Korea internally celebrated. He jumped and punched his hands in the air like a champion.

“What are you doing here, weirdo?”

South Korea was startled and couldn't help screaming. “Ahhh! Fuck! North!! What the hell, how long have you been there?!”

North Korea was holding a book and wearing a pair glasses. He put

the book he was holding in the shelf and nonchalantly replied, “When you were yelling like a maniac and talking to yourself.”

It basically means he's been here the whole time?! What the fuck!

“Tch. I'm in a good mood so I won't be arguing with you. Hmp! Out of my way, nerd!”

South Korea purposely brushed against North's shoulder, his chest pumped arrogantly as he walked passed.

“You're going out with Philipia?” North queried.

South Korea immediately raised his hackles in defense. “Don't you dare! It's a date between me and Philipia! A third party like you isn't needed!”

North stared at his brother's vigilant attitude and pretended to express his regrets. “Too bad, I was hoping I could join in.”

“Yeah right, in your dreams!” He rebuffed and turned to his heel, striding out of the library. When the door closed with a harsh sound, North Korea's nonchalant expression eased and slowly transitioned into disappointment. He turned to the open window and leaned in the same position South was in. He stared at the ground below and saw a woman walking limply from the Southwest building.

He scoffed and changed his sight to look at the distance. From here, he can see the dormitory building and the huge grandfather clock of the school.

Suddenly, the closed doors of the library opened with indignance. “Hey!”

South Korea called. North turned around and raised a brow, he smirked and wore the provoking and nonchalant look from earlier. “What's this, did you back out or change your mind?”

South Korea gritted his teeth. He knew he(NK) was doing it on purpose but it was still exasperating! Seriously! So annoying!

“I saw how pitiful you are so I'm gonna order some take out for you! Don't get me wrong! You're still not allowed in our date for two people with Philipia!”

North Korea was surprised and didn't expect this kind of twist. He chuckled and shrugged, “Anything's fine.”

“Tch, yeah right, I'll order kimchi for you!”

“You dare...”

“Ha! I will! I'm the one paying! And I'm the one ordering! I'll order kimchi rice with kimchi soup and kimchi marinated beef and pork for you! HAHAHAHAHA! Suck on that asshole! Bleh!!”

After the provocation, South immediately closed the door and ran away. The sound of his cowardly and fast footsteps were particularly loud in the empty hallway which echoed inside the library.

North felt like nuking someone but held back. He took a loud, deeeeeppp breath before calming down. There's no use arguing with a kid who has no manners!

At about 12 pm. North was working on his remaining papers when the door to the student council opened. North thought it was China but caught a whiff of food. He lifted his head and saw South, wearing an annoying grin on his face while carrying two bags of food.

North: “……”

It's not late to nuke this guy, right?

South closed the door with a good mood and went to North's table and placed the takeout. “Out of the goodness of my heart, dear brother, enjoy this amazing food which your sincere younger brother bought for you!”

North stared at the plastic bag that has the brand of the restaurant. He looked at South with no emotion in his eyes, asserting, “Kimchi rice with kimchi soup and kimchi marinated beef and pork?”

South's eyelid twitched in annoyance. “I'm not that heartless you asshole,” he justified, “I know you're allergic to kimchi, why should I order something that can kill you?”

“You did it multiple times in the past.”

South: “……”

South: “Dear brother, the past is the past. Why are you so insistent on what happened? It was an accident!”

North rolled his eyes. “Bullshit.”

“It's true! And! I still can't understand why it has to be kimchi—of all food and beverages, it had to be kimchi you're allergic to!”

North takes out the insulated package and opened the cover. The smell of beef and stew invading his nostrils.

“See? I'm not heartless!”

North looked at the second bag, asking, “What about that?”

South Korea pouted and placed the bag on China's table unwillingly. “Philipia bought it for him...”

North raised a brow and looked at his brother's expression. He couldn't help but hope. There was a small expectation in him so he asked, “then this...” he held the food in his hand.

South grumbled under his breath and replied, “Philipia was actually the one who bought it... she chose it for you.”

The small fire in North began jumping in joy. Albeit small, it was there. Somehow, he looked at his brother amiably and can't help but feel like he was nice to look at.

Ahhh, was the sun this bright and lively before? He should go out for a morning stroll from time to time.

Seeing the lively atmosphere around his brother, South indignantly remarked. “I forgot my wallet okay?! So I had no choice but let her

choosea and pay for the food!”

North took a bite of the food Philipia chose for him and thought how tasty and savory it is. When he heard his brother's words. He frowned and looked at him with disgust and disappointment. “I can't believe you let her buy you food. Shame on you.”

South was shocked, he gasped in exasperation. “Y-you did not just say that to me, to my face!”

“I did. I did say it, to your face,” he clarified while taking a bite of his food.

South grumbled and his resentment can't be contain. He wanted to flip the table and steal the food but... It was the food Philipia bought with her own money! He can only remain still and watch his brother eat the food with lavish indignantly.

“Tsk. Whatever. It's not like I care.”

North hummed in response. He continues to eat, while ignoring the other.

South watched North eat and noticed how his hair had grown, he even had to use one had to hold the side of his hair, preventing it from touching the food. He scoffed and suggested with an uncaring tone, “Cut your hair dude.”

Philipia went back home and changed into something comfortable before making her way towards the place that New Zealand told her. She walked along the side of the road while looking at her phone from time to time, making sure she isn't lost.

The place was a bit far so she had to use a cab and walk on foot after reaching a certain destination. The place New Zealand chose was a place near the edge of the city with a lot of trees and a huge forest. There was a pathway and a viewing area. People would come here to jog, camp, exercise, and relax. Even if you were born from the city, coming to places with a lot of green and nature can be relaxing and helps loosen some tight nerves.

On a large clearing near a cliff, Philipia saw Australia playing with

deer and a helicopter parked behind him. Speaking of deer, Athena was sent back by Philipia before meeting up with South Korea. Although Athena was unwilling and would rather stay with her, she still obediently flew to her original master. If only Laos was here, Athena wouldn't be so sad to separate from her!

Philipia chuckled when she recalled the unwilling look on Athena's face. Australia noticed Philipia and waved her over. Philipia sauntered towards him. “Where's New Zealand?”

“He's in a call. He had to make sure Father's not home and lucky for us, he went on a meeting. He's rarely home anyways so it isn't that suprising, but it's still better to be careful.”

Philipia agreed and peeked behind Australia and saw New Zealand on the call. New Zealand saw Philipia, his eyes visibly brightened before he gestured for her to wait and hurriedly ended the call.

“You ready?” He asked, pushing the bangs away from her face.

Philipia nodded and blushed at his action, it was so natural that Philipia couldn't react for a while.

Australia rolled his eyes at his brother and interrupted, “Ehem, we might lose daylight if we delay.”

“Right. Hop on.”

The three leaders got on the helicopter with New Zealand as the pilot. They wore their headphones and began to ascend.

It took about 5 hours, to arrive in UK. Philipia looked at the city below in amazement. She saw the famous London bridge and Buckingham palace where the royal family of the normal citizen lives. Even though they are a royal family, the leaders were still the most powerful and influencial that the Queen had to bow and kneel when greeting.

They flew around for another half an hour before Philipia finally saw the place Mr. UK lives. His house was located very far and away from the noise and city, it wasn't as big as Buckingham palace, but the place was so beautiful, so out of this world Philipia

couldn't put it into words. She can only describe it with a poem she once read.

They circled around the place before descending with the help of a guide. When the helicopter successfully landed, the door was opened from the outside.

“Sir! Yau did not' tell me yau wer' arriving today!” A thick British accent came and said. Philipia felt like she was stepping into those royal palace movies she once saw.

London stood outside the helicopter as he bowed and greeted Australia and New Zealand. He wore the standard three piece butler uniform and white gloves. “If I knew, I wauld've prepared to welcom' yaur arrival!”

New Zealand chuckled and patted his shoulder. “Relax, you're starting to sound like an old nanny.”

“But sir!”

“Instead of nagging me, shouldn't you greet our guest?”

London straightened his back and blinked. “Guest?” He asked and looked towards Australia helping Philipia get down. Seeing a female leader, London gave New Zealand the look of daggers.

New Zealand: “……”

London hurriedly fixed his expression and wore a professional smile and gave a courtly bow, befitting of a royal. “Greetings female leader, welcome to the land of Old Blighty.”

Philipia was never greeted with this much chivalry and didn't know how to react. She pinched the small hem of her pants and gave a princess(?) bow in return. “H-how do you do?”

London mused. “It' is a pleasur' to be at' yaur servaiss. Pleas', call me London”

Philipia glanced at New Zealand tentatively.

Seeing her awkward yet adorable reaction, New Zealand came and reminded, “you're scaring her.”

London stood straight and frowned. “And whos' fault' is that'?”

New Zealand sighed helplessly, “I didn't tell you because I didn't want to be greeted,” he said while his eyes squinting at London.

London watched the four young masters grow up and knew each and every one of their personalities, before and after the memories erased. And seeing this look from New Zealand, he immediately got the message and closed one eye with one finger on his lips and stated, “I understand. I saw nothing, I heard nothing, and especially, didn't' greit' yau nor sei yau arriv'.”

New Zealand nodded in satisfactory and walked in front. “Father and brother Canada aren't here, correct?”

“No sir, they're not'.”

“My mother?”

“Madam Franc' and sir Franc' went' hom'.”

“By home, you mean...”

London nodded and opened the door for them. “Madam Franc' called sir Franc' from Tethyria a few days ago for a seriaus discussion regarding the cauntry,” he explained, “It' seims lik' she's planning to giv' it back to him.”

Australia whistled and remarked, “About time. He's been playing statusless for way too long.”

“I also think it was a good idea to hand the country to mother first. If not, their country wouldn't be anywhere what it has today.”

London thought the same and agreed. “But' this tim', the madam wants to retir'. She's bein a leader for way too long—or so she said.”

Australia rolled his eyes, disparaging, “Her? Since when did she feel tired holding a lot of power? That woman's crazy.”

London glanced at Australia admonishingly. “Yaung master, she is yaur mother. One way or another she gav' birth to yau and gav' yau all her tim' and attention when yau neided it most'.”

Australia pouts and rest the back of his head with his hands. “Tch...”

London sighed and bowed to Philipia. “I apologiz' that' yau had to witness and endjur' this family feud.”

Philipia didn't mind. She can pretend to be invisible and not listen. London felt like this young leader was too considerate and thoughtful, no wonder these brothers can tease and play with her.

“Anyways, we're not here to have a reunion.” New Zealand hurriedly reared the main reason. “Philipia has a request.”

London turned to Philipia. He placed his hand on his chest and submit his services. “I am at' yaur disposal, whatever do yau neid of my assistanc'?”

Philipia looked at Australia and New Zealand, unsure what to do.

“Hahaha, don't be scared. London wouldn't bite.” Australia laughed.

Philipia pursed her lips and timidly requested, “can I look around the place? I'm looking for someone...”

London didn't expect such a request. But as a request from a female leader, a nice leader at that, he accepted and undertake it himself.

Philipia walked around the place, using the skill blood connection just a bit. London had asked all the servants to be dismissed in the whole place and allowed Philipia to roam around. New Zealand wanted to help but he had to take a call and told Philipia he'll be joining her search for a while. Australia on the other hand went to find his pets that he missed and told her not to hesitate to use London as much as she wants.

London also didn't mind and it wasn't such a big task. It was just a request from someone to look around your house. Yeah, nothing to worry about.

If it were Filipia, she wouldn't think anything strange, but Philipia felt like everything's going so well she was a bit suspicious.

As she turned a corner, she bumped into someone and was about to apologize when she heard a familiar thick French accent criticizing, “Ahh! Vo dares valk carelessly?!”

Philipia flinched and froze. Her whole body trembled and slowly looked up to see a tall, slender, and gorgeous woman.

France or Gaul, gave Philipia a glare of contempt before her expression froze and looked at Philipia incredulously. “You?” she pointed with her long red nails, it was well maintained and beautiful.

Philipia swallowed really hard and tried not to make too much noise. “I-I'm sorry...” she managed to say with the tiniest voice ever.

Filipia! How did you manage to stand up against this lady?!

Wait, isn't she supposed to be in her country? What is she doing here?! I mean, it's only natural for her to be here since she's Mr. UK's wife, but what is she doing here, of all times?! Philipia wailed and cried in her head, wondering why she can't just disappear like a ghost.

Gaul's pair of red lips opened. Her perfectly rowed white teeth showing. “Vat are you doing here?”

Nothing, just asked your two sons to ask your butler, which is your capital city, to dismiss all the servants in the house and allow her to roam around freely and unguarded to look for someone!

Philipia tried to explain, the best and reasonable way possible without getting killed by her deadly look. “U-uhmm... Came here, l-looking for something.”

Gaul raised her perfect, on-fleek eyebrow. “You're fery different from the last time I zaw you. Vy the change?”

“It's a long s-story.”

“You'fe pecome fery covardly, timid and... Uhh, disbleazing no? I like the you pefore, praffe(brave), and you had my resbect as a female leader put now? It is dizaboinding”

Philipia didn't even feel offended anymore. For her, Gaul was right. There was nothing to be angry about. She was stating facts and the truth, nothing more than the truth.

Gaul saw her become quiet. Although quiet, scared, and timid, she was looking at her straight in the eyes. As if she wasn't backing down in her own small ways.

Gaul rolled her eyes. Philipia almost thought she saw Australia. Gaul flicked her curly locks of hair back and walked passed her. Her heels clicking on the clean and marbled floor before she stopped and without looking at her she said, “At the end of the corridor, there is a room. The thing you are looking for is there.”

Philipia stared at Gaul's back and can see how straight and confident she is. This woman, this woman raised four powerful leaders by herself, raised her younger brother and a country by herself.

It is only natural for her to be arrogant and prideful, because there is something for her to be arrogant about, and that's okay.

Philipia couldn't help imitating her posture. She should be confident herself too! “Thank you,” she said but the female leader Gaul can no longer hear it.

Philipia followed her instructions and saw a double door at the end of the corridor. She looked at the empty corridor to the left and right before carefully twisting the knob and opened it.

The door made a creaking sound which echoed in the dark room. She walked inside and closed the door behind her and searched for the switch of the light.

When she found the switch, she flipped it up and the darkness engulfing the room disappeared, bringing light to whatever that is hidden.

Turns out, it was a gallery room. The room was filled with paintings of portraits and landscapes.

———————

HON! HON! HON! BAGUETTE, BAGUETTE, BAGUETTE, RATATOUILLE, RATATOUILLE, RATATOUILLE, QUI, QUI, QUI~ ⸸ (□ᗜ□*)

Chapter 53 : Perla

Philipia was surprised by the amount of paintings and portraits, she didn't know where else to look.

“Back home, our own gallery room didn't have this much paintings,” she comments.

Philipia surveyed each painting, probed around the edges and behind the curtains. Each paintings were delicate and you can tell the artist was skillfull and a master at his work. Each brushstrokes contain bountiful feelings of passion and freedom. But one particular painting caught Philipia's attention. It was a landscape painting of a forest with huts that can be seen at the distant.

Philipia inspected closer and brush her fingertips on the canvas. She can feel the rough surface and textures and couldn't help but feel the painters feeling when he made this.

It was filled with yearning and love. Unlike the other paintings, this one in particular had a sense of reality to it, as if it was painted from someone's memory. It was as if, she could almost reach in and enter it.

Suddenly, she was pulled out of her stupor by the sound of her phone notification. Philipia calms her beating heart and picked up her phone and read the new message.

It was from an unknown number, the same unknown number who called her this morning. Philipia hesitated but still opened the new message.

Unknown number: [At the very bottom.]

Philipia felt uneasy reading that single sentence. But she looked down at the bottom of the painting, trying to find whatever it was.

Dang it, if this mysterious person was gonna tell her, why not

specifically say it rather not talk in riddles?

Philipia groped around the painting's edges and made sure not to harm the canvas. While groping the bottom, Philipia felt something protruding at the back at the lowest part of the painting. It felt like something bulging. She was skeptical on what it was when she accidentally put a bit of pressure and pressed it. They made a ‘click’, before the whole painting moved and opened like a door.

“Ah!”

Surprised by this situation, Philipia was caught off guard and unceremoniously tripped and fell on her butt. She groaned in pain while curled up on the floor. “Ooowwwwwww!!” she cried.

When she looked at the painting again, it had already moved to the side and showed her a passageway that was big enough for five people to walk through.

Philipia sat up but hissed in pain coming from her butt. Tears welled up in her eyes but it didn't fell, it would've been better if it did. Unbeknownst to her she looked too pitiful it can make anyone with a heart of steel soften to the core.

Philipia got up while stumbling and limped her way towards the black and eerie looking passage. But she wasn't scared, she was afraid of real people than ghost. And she hasn't seen a ghost in her whole life, although she would've been fine looking for one herself. Besides, she's been through and seen something way worse than a scary looking passage.

Philipia held on to the wall but didn't expect for the wall to be so cold she shuddered from the temperature. Even so, she treaded lightly. With no light in sight and only a narrow, long, and dangerous stairs. Philipia took every step carefully, afraid she might fall and break her bones—that would've been embarrassing.

It was then her phone rang, this time, a phone call from New Zealand: “Where are you?”

Philipia hesitated to answer. Should she say she found a secret

passage in their house and now she's inside the secret passage? No way. Even so, it was their house and she was in someone else's territory, it'd be best to be honest. “I'm at the—”

Suddenly, the call got cut off, as if someone was controlling her phone by a third party. Philipia looked at the phone in doubt and felt something ominous. It was like someone was trying to preventing her from any sort of distraction to learn the truth.

The truth?

What is the truth?

Wasn't she here simply because there is a certain connection? A connection that didn't respond no matter how many times she called and she got curious? Or maybe it's because Gaul told her the direction and she blindly followed it?

All of these, seemed to be leading her to something or someone...

It was dark, so dark she can't even see her hands. Not only that, it was cold, freezing, and chilling. It was like stepping inside a giant freezer. With no light to guide her way, Philipia opened her phone and turned on her flashlight. The moment that small light appeared, she saw a thick mass of cold fog.

“W-where...” she asked herself while shivering from the cold. Philipia used her other hand and leaned on the wall to the right as a guide. Fortunately, it was only a one way path so she wouldn't have to worry about disorientation from a loss of direction. She kept walking straight and the more deeper she tread, the more colder, more denser the fog.

It wasn't until the wall disappeared and heard her own footsteps. She must've arrived at an open space? A huge room with higher ceilings perhaps? She stomped her feet again and listened to the echo to determine how big this room is.

The echo continued almost a minute which signifies that the room is massive. Even if she raised the flashlight and move it around, she can still see nothing but fog.

She tried walking randomly to the right when she finally found something. It was a glass display covered in frost. She used her sleeve to wipe the ice that covered the glass, but to no avail, perhaps from long term exposure to the cold temperature, she can only remove the frost from the outside but the inside had crystallize.

Just what in the world is in here? Why did Gaul bring her here? What is in here that she has to know?

Philipia leaned closer to the glass and even shined the light through it. Although blurry, she can somehow make out an object inside. Like a shoe of some sort? Philipia was unsure so she can only guess.

She looked around more and guessed that there must be more than just one glass display—and she was right. There was more than one glass display. She found about three different glass displayed, positioned in a very neat and orderly manner. Like the way museums arrange it.

She did the same to the first one and wiped off the ice from the glass but ended up using too much force and she heard a small but loud enough to be heard, a glass breaking.

Philipia: "……"

Oops.

Philipia carefully lifted her arm that was used as a wiper away from the glass. Not even three seconds in, the glass formed a spiderweb crack. Intrusive thoughts got the best of her so she tapped the glass and it shattered completely.

"Ah! Oh no! Oh no, no, no, nooooo..."

How much is a glass display again...? She can pay for it right? Wait, judging from the style of this place, it must be some kind of expensive and rare type of glass right? Is it a crystal? Is it too late to donate half of the treasures they found on Maria Makiling?

Philipia panicked and started searching on geegle how much half a gold when converted into cash. When she held the phone, the

flashlight directly shone on the item inside the glass display. Philipia's panic-stricken state was pulled into the item she saw.

It was a crystallize sampaguita.

Philipia blew on the rice grain—or powder glass that she shattered and picked up the crystallize flower. She can tell it was a real flower, not molded or carved, but a real flower, perfectly preserved.

Her heart can't help but be shaken as a speculation started to form. She thought of something, there was a conjecture but she swallowed it back. She can't just make baseless guesses, she needs proof.

And to gather proof, one has to be impulsive and decisive of their choices. Philipia punched another glass display and it easily shattered, she didn't even have to put it so much strength. The years of ice merged with the glass and had long made it fragile.

On the second display she broke, the first one she actually saw when coming in, contained a bakya. An old traditional slippers made of wood. The footwear she was holding was small, obviously it belonged to a small and petite woman. But that wasn't Philipia was focused on. It was the familiar design and style of the footwear made her recall a certain memory.

Small, fragile feet walked along the shore, walked along the busy and crowded market, walked along a pair of a man's footwear with the same design.

A sampaguita flower was sewn on top. It looked delicate and beautiful. Seeing this, Philipia's heart accelerated and her hand holding the sandals trembled, like her soul, like her mind, like her thoughts. She involuntarily dropped the sandal which created a crisp sound. It echoed ever so loudly for a minute, and every echo was like someone unveiling deep rooted memories she had long hidden.

“No...” She mumbled but her body betrayed her words when she broke another display. This time, it was bigger and longer type. Similar to a glass display for clothes.

When the glass fell on the floor, like raining diamonds that can tear your skin apart, it revealed a dress. It was pink with a hint of red... Ah, no—it wasn't a hint of red, it wasn't part of the fabric in the first place. The red, was a stain that covered the stomach area. The color had long dried and turned into an ugly darker color.

And in the middle, was a hole, a small hole that was the size of a bullet.

“No...”

Philipia's mind had long gone blank. She stared at the dress with no emotion in her eyes. The hand holding the phone released its hold and fell on the floor. The screen turned on and showed a message from the unknown number: [don't cry.]

Suddenly, there were multiple footsteps coming from above. Then, the dark room brightened, the lights had turned on, showing a spacious room with high ceilings, filled with glass displays in varying sizes, God knows what was inside them, hidden in the frost, hidden by the fog, hidden by the man who proudly claims to be someone who was always right...

“Philipia...” UK stood at the entrance, panting and out of breath. He looked like someone who just ran away from an important event.

His suit was exquisite, his hair was neatly slicked back, showing the perfect angular and sharp contours of his face. But on his hand was a phone blinking red. There must've been a trap or an alarm set in this place, who knows when it reminded him, but Philipia didn't care. She didn't even look at him or spare him a glance. She was gazing at the dress that once belonged to someone important in her life.

“Philipia, come here.”

UK held out his hand and stopped his guards from advancing. If it was anyone else, they would've been punished and killed on the spot. But this is Philipia, the daughter of his beloved. Not only is she the only daughter, but her face, from her eyes to her lips and body was an exact replica of Perla. He couldn't bare to hurt her.

Philipia finally moved after what felt like forever. She slowly faced UK. Her dim colors, the heterochromatic eyes were pulsing. Each pulse were her heart beating. It was beating, beating, beating...

The sound resounded in her head and her body was cold—not because of the room—but because of the dread, the betrayal and the lies.

Being stared at by those eyes, UK shuddered. It felt like the room turned even colder, like being thrown in the cold sea, never to resurface again.

“What is this place?” She asked. Her voice was calm, steady, but flat. Only Philipia knew that it the opposite of what she's feeling feeling.

“This place is just an old museum. It used to be the gallery but was moved, I—”

“Don't lie to me!” She screamed. Golden tears started trickling down to her cheeks.

Seeing it made UK stare in a daze. It was such beautiful tears, the epitome of an expensive sorrow.

“I'm not lying,” he said as softly as he can. “Come here now, let me take you out, it's cold.”

As if something snapped, Philipia muttered repeatedly, “Cold, it is very very cold...” she must've been cold done here.

All of a sudden, she froze and slowly turned around. She wasn't able to notice it earlier due to her frantic mood, but now that she's able to think a bit clearly, she realized there was a red curtain behind her. The curtain was shaped in circle, covering, hiding something.

Seeing her turn, UK's anxiety reached its zenit and commanded his men. “Take her away, but make sure she doesn't get hurt.”

“Yes, sir.”

As the servants and guards were about to advance and apprehend

her, the pressure in the room dropped, as if gravity became ten times heavier. Everyone, including UK, including the displays, experienced the tremendous power. The glass shattered all at once as if being crushed by an invisible force. Of course, they were no exception. Being a man with bones and blood, imagine experiencing a pressure that you can't fight back.

UK was still okay, he was a leader, an old one at that. His body and disposition was stronger. Even so, he felt the pain and torment. He forced himself to look up and watched Philipia take one step at a time towards the curtain.

No! She can't! She mustn't! He guarded this room for so many years, not even his wife and kids were allowed in here! Only he, UK, is allowed to peer and look at the one hidden behind the curtains!

But to no avail, he couldn't fight against the power with something he never had. Philipia stood in front, just an arm away, she can see what is inside.

But as she was walking towards it, she was using the skill and it automatically connected it straight to the curtain, specifically, behind it.

“No! Philipia please! You can't! You can't look inside!” UK begged, yelled, and screamed. The first time he was in this kind of situation, helpless, rumpled, and unkept was when Perla broke up with him, the second was when she died... And the third—it wasn't the same person but was still connected to her, was the present situation.

He was far from the tidy, orderly, and well groomed Mr. UK that everybody knows.

The curtain was hanged all the way to the ceiling. It was long, heavy, beautiful, and thick. The same kind of fabric you'd use in operas or live shows, but more expensive and softer. Philipia had to use two hands to push it aside to see what was UK so desperate to hide.

The sound of fabric flapping made a ringing noise inside UK's head. The fog that was left undisturbed for many decades danced and

swirled around the room. Like a play that was about to show its main course.

Inside the curtain was a beautiful chair adorned all kinds of gem, like someone had put all the gems in the world in one place. It was gold and was carved with entricate details of trees and flowers. The cushion used was an expensive type of fabric. It was as red as blood but as soft as a feather. Sitting on it is a woman wearing a gorgeous white gown. The gown was so beautiful, you can see that the beads and patterns were obviously made by hand—such a masterpiece. Philipia wondered how long it took to make this dress.

Was it a team who made this or was it just one person?

The woman was wearing a white lacey veil. The patterns tells a story of a man and woman who were destined but never fated for each other. The veil was long that it almost covered the platform where she sat. It's even longer than the fabric of the gown.

“Noooo!!!! Philipia! Stop!”

Philipia ignored the pleading of a desperate and pathetic man. Placing her hand on the bottom of the veil and gently—ever so gently, pushed it away, revealing an exquisite face that looked 80% similar to hers.

Their eyes were closed, her long and delicate eyelashes, was like a fan, it was gold in color; when the veil gently fell on the floor, it revealed her silky and long golden hair, curled neatly to look like springs. It rest on her shoulder, as if hugging her, on her chest, as if to provoke and seduce. Strands of it fell on her small delicate face, tempting anyone to brush it back and place it behind her ears. The face was as smooth as a sculpture, with no fault, no blemish, not even a scar to be seen. And despite the cold, her lips were plump, pink, glossy, and smiling.

“Why is... mama here?”

Perla, like the most exquisite and breathtaking doll, sat on the most exquisite and priceless chair, dressed and posed like a doll, like a toy, like some kind of thing! To be handled, touched, moved,

groped, violated, and fiddled with to his heart's content!

It was maddening!

Philipia fell on the floor, her body devoid of energy as she wailed and cried in anguish. It sounds so heartbreaking as if it was her soul was being cut. Golden tears kept streaming down her face, falling like a shower as she screamed. Her shoulders trembled and her heart couldn't stop aching and throbbing—she had to hide her cries in her hand and strangle her scream.

But it only made it worse. Overwhelming sorrow engulfed her small body, the tears wouldn't stop falling, and falling, and falling, like steady stream, leaving golden stains on her cheeks. She could feel her body convulsing uncontrollably as she clenched her hands into fists, the tears kept coming out of her eyes, but they were no longer crying. They were just watering from the intense pain that she felt inside.

The ache was getting worse instead of getting better. Every time she closed her eyes she see it again and again.

The betrayal was so much she was left gasping, almost choking herself. She dropped her head and curled helplessly on the floor. she screamed and screamed, almost bloodcurdling, pouring out all the pain that was stabbing and squeezing her heart. Even if the cold made her voice scratchy, itchy, and dry. She still screamed until her voice broke and her vocals being torn apart. It was hard to swallow it all back and stop.

She wanted to do nothing but scream louder, but she knew it wouldn't change a thing. Her chest heaved and she was coughing hard, she was trying to breathe, to calm her mind. But she kept breathing that sharp cold, drying her throat, drying her mouth, her tears. Philipia heaved heavily, gasping for air. Her cry echoed, like a banshee that can't stop.

The pressure had long disappeared. UK didn't move and remained in place. He was sitting feebly on the floor, watching the scene unfold before him.

New Zealand and Australia heard the commotion, even Canada, who was confused as to why his father suddenly leave, was left speechless by what he saw.

The servants and guards were on the floor, their orifices bleeding everywhere, but they weren't dead, just unconscious. Meanwhile UK looked much better compared to them, but his mouth and shirt was stained with his blood. Because he forced himself and fought against the pressure brought by Philipia, it caused a heavy backlash.

“What the hell is happening?!” Canada exclaimed as he pulled his father by his collar. But UK didn't do anything, he didn't even fight back as he remained weak and destitute, as if his reason, his life itself, was taken away.

Australia walked towards the center and saw Philipia curled up on the foot of a woman sitting on a chair. It was as if she was begging and praying to a god that will never respond. It looks serene, picture perfect, but discomforting. From afar, he thought it was a carved marble statue. But up close, he can see, that this woman, was a real person—it was a real body, a corpse, that was perfectly preserved who-knows-how long!

New Zealand finally understood what was happening and was much more calmer. He immediately asked someone to take care of the servants and guards before walking towards Philipia.

Australia didn't dare walk up close, he was afraid he might break something he shouldn't break. Reasons tells him he should help the female leader and lead her away from here, but his body was frozen from the dread. His stomach couldn't help churning, twisting together to form a knot, making him feel like throwing up.

Just from observing, he can make his own deduction of what his own father did here—did to this poor woman.

New Zealand walked passed Australia and gently held Philipia's arms, intending to help her up.

But the female leader was like a ticking time bomb, the moment she was touched she directed her eyes to him, glowing bright like a

billion diamonds piercing him all over, screaming, “Don't touch me! Don't touch me!! Don't touch me!!”

Australia and New Zealand who was much closer was affected the most, Canada and UK was slightly affected but it was still painful. Canada can't even imagine how it must feel for his two brothers at the front.

“Aust! Zea!” He yelled and saw Australia kneeling on the floor on all four.

But New Zealand, who was the most affected and directed at, flinched but didn't show any sort of reaction aside from the furrowed brow.

He leaned closed and cupped Philipia's cheeks. “It's okay, I won't hurt you.”

Philipia seemed to have been soothed as the pressure and the pain instantly disappeared.

Australia gasped for air, clutching his aching chest. He looked at Philipia with slight fear and apprehension.

Canada was in the same state but he was able to compose himself much earlier. But then he looked at his father who simply wiped the blood off the side of his mouth. “You sick bastard.”

UK snickered, as if mocking him. “Me? Sick? If I'm sick then what are you?”

His statement made the three look at each other. New Zealand was hugging Philipia who now lost consciousness.

“What the hell, dad!” Australia admonished. “What the fuck is wrong with you, you physcho!”

UK laughed, his expression crazy and manic. His eyes were wide and his pupils were dilated while his lips were smiling that didn't look like a smile. “That's right! I'm your dad! in some way, you all came from me! Without me, there wouldn't be any of you! And my blood runs through your veins, if I'm crazy and sick, then what are

you? Huh???? WHAT ARE YOU?!”

“You, are but a sad, desperate, wretched, pitiful, and pathetic man. My sons are not, and I, Gaul! Made sure they are far from a lunatic, like you!” Gaul suddenly appeared with France behind her. He looked at the mess in the room and easily pinpoint Philipia in New Zealand's arms.

Gaul's voice became powerful and her speech became articulate and clear. She looked condescendingly at the man with her back straight and chest puffed.

“You bitch—”

“Qui! I am a bitch! But this bitch can move mountains, command a legion of soldiers, and give birth to four powerful brave men who grew up, away from your sickening and disgusting nature!”

UK was about to stand and teach this woman a lesson when his body swayed and stumbled on the floor. Nobody helped him, nobody came to his aid. It was as if UK aged a thousand years, his face looked nothing like before.

Gaul opened a fan and fanned herself, looking around the museum that UK had kept hidden. “Pitiful Perla...”

“Do not say her name from your dirty mouth or I'll fucking slit it and make sure you never close them again!”

Gaul ignored his threat. “Perla, was a kind woman, but she was pitiful. If only I saved her much earlier, none of this would've happened. She wouldn't be trapped under this place, forever frozen, played by a desperate and ugly man.”

UK sobbed and punched the floor. His wailing did not fit his image. Snot and tears filled his face, looking dirty and crazy. He muttered over and over, “She was mine, Perla's mine, she's mine, mine, mine, mine...”

Canada looked at his father with trepidation and almost saw his own self. He too, felt the same for Philipia, his Maple syrup, so he couldn't judge or critisize his father.

He was right. His blood flows through his body and he was the same—because he though of doing the exact same thing to Philipia if she ever dies.

Gaul snapped her fan close and glanced at her sons. The little leaders who used to run around and act naughty all the time, have all grown up. She felt proud but didn't show it on her face.

But then her eyes landed on the unconscious philipia and the dead Perla.

“Like mother, Like daughter,” she said before turning to her heel and leaving. She came and left with pressure and grace.

New Zealand carried Philipia in his arms when they left the basement. France came up to him and asked, “How is she?”

New Zealand stared at Philipia's sleeping face. “What do you think?”

“She must've cried a lot.”

“You knew about that place?”

France pursed his lips. “I knew but I didn't think or even imagined that it was Philipia's mother behind the curtain, the first and last time I've entered that place was a long time ago and I was drunk at the time.”

Canada watched his father being escorted by the servant and ordered London, “You keep an eye on him. And also, take everything from that room, put them in a somewhere.”

London heard about what was down there by the servants and hesitated to ask, “What' abaut' the body sir?”

Canada glanced at Philipia carried by New Zealand. “Take the body out as well. We'll wait for Philipia's decision.”

London nodded and left to get everything.

Canada went to New Zealand's side and suggested, “Put her down

first and asked the maids to change her clothes. You can't carry her all the time.”

New Zealand frowned but still obeyed. His brother was right, Philipia needs a proper rest. He stared at the dry golden tear stain and felt a pang of pain in his chest.

Philipia was taken to a guest room and was made to lay down while the maids helped her change and wipe off the stains off her face.

They were careful and gentle, making sure the female leader wasn't uncomfortable.

But even if they shook her or made a loud noise, Philipia wouldn't wake up.

She was trapped in a dream. A dream and a memory. In it, she was in her younger self. But unlike what really happened, she stayed with her mother and never left her side, but even if she stood in front of her, protect her, defend her. Perla was still shot, left to bleed alone on the ground. And then a tall dark entity appeared and took her mother away. It tore, ate, and destroyed her mother's body.

Young Philipia in the dream yelled for help, but nobody came. Just endless fire and darkness and then a sudden gust of extreme cold.

The dream kept repeating, over and over until she lost her mind from the madness. Suddenly, the noise disappeared and a sense of peace came.

Young Philipia became the Philipia we all know. 80% of her face belonged to her mother. The softness of her eyes, the gentle air she brings. She looked like Perla but more dazzling, more polished, and more stronger. If Perla was a diamond, Philipia was a Jade.

When everything faded, A man walks up to her. His body was riddled in cracks and holes, like a mirror clumsily pieced together.

“Maharlika...”

Maharlika pitifully looked at the youth. He kneeled to her height

and kissed her forehead. “Don't cry,” he said, “Everything tangible breaks, every life ends. Same goes for your mother. Her body is but an empty vessel, she had long left and joined your father a long time ago. UK may have obtained her body, but he never obtained her soul, her heart, her love. She gave it all to you, to your brother's, and most importantly to your father. Nobody is perfect, not even Perla. She makes mistake like a normal person does. She can be tired, make decisions in her life she'll regret, and even die unjustly. But, she was a strong woman who fought for what she believed. She was strong enough to face someone with a gun whilst she didn't have any aside from her strong willpower and voice. Yes, she cheated and was unloyal. But she was faithful to her husband and remained so till the end. She chose to die rather than be with UK—and you know that— she must've been alive when UK took her and she knew what was gonna happen, so she chose to end her life, she chose you and your family.”

“So don't be sad. it's been way too long, let us all move on. Move on, Philipia. There's still so much work to do.”

Philipia opened her eyes to a dark room. She sat up and looked around, but all she could see was the ceiling. She felt no pain in her body, which surprised her. Perhaps they had given her something for that as well—or perhaps her body healed.

Whatever the case, she found herself glad not to be suffering from a headache at least.

She sat up, slowly, and looked out through the small window near the bed. It faced east, toward the sunrise.

There was no light and the only thing helping her see was the setting sun streamed into the room, illuminating a bed along one wall, a table with food on it, and a couple chairs. The place smelled strongly of pine and coffee. She opened her mouth and tentatively called out, “Canada?”

At the corner of the room where it was the darkest, a man wearing an unbuttoned shirt, pants insinuating his waist, and a hair that was ruffled into a mess, walked out..

“How did you know?”

Philipia recalled that time in the snow with him and replied, a small tint of pink appearing on her cheeks, “From the smell. You smell like coffe and pinetree.”

Canada gazed at Philipia's face for a moment before taking a seat besides the bed. He poured her a glass of water from the nightstand and handed it to her, “Dont' worry, there's no drug in it that will put you to sleep.”

Philipia mused but didn't hesitate to accept the water and drank from it. Canada watched the water decreasing before his eyes peered downwards to her throat that was bobbing up and down. It looked so fragile and easy to snap.

He hurriedly shake the bad thoughts away. “Does your throat hurt?”

Philipia handed the empty glass back and shake her head in reply. “My body probably healed it.”

“A female leader's body can be so convenient at times,” Canada remarked and placed the glass on the nightstand.

He added, “New Zealand and Australia are cleaning up that place... the secret basement.” he carefully looked at her reaction, ready to hand her another glass of water if something goes wrong.

Philipia thought of the room and what she discovered. She recalled the pain and that throbbing she felt in her chest that wouldn't seem to go away and thought of what she's feeling now, comparing it. But aside from a slight nausea, there was nothing else. No pain, no throbbing—nothing.

“You can throw it all away, better yet, burn it... please.”

Canada smiled and nodded. “Alright, but your mother's corpse, what do you want to do with it?”

Philipia thought of Maharalika's words and said, “Burn it and scatter it.” Her voice was firm and resolute, as if they weren't

talking about a corpse but a thing that's easily discarded.

“Are you sure? Do you want to see her one more time?”

“No. Mama's dead, she's been dead for a long time now. It's pointless to mourn and grieve for something that happened a long time ago.”

Canada gazed at Philipia. He can feel her seriousness and didn't insist more of emotional plays. He takes out his phone and sent a message to London. “New Zealand told me he won't be able to join you when going back so I'll be the one to take you.”

“Aren't you busy? Weren't you in a meeting with your father?”

Canada stood up and wore his coat. He smirked, a seductive yet mischievous look on his face. “I'm the boss, I can do whatever I want.” He reach out for his hand to Philipia and asked, “Shall we?”

Philipia stared at Canada's hand for a second before accepting his help. “Good girl.”

Canada waited outside the door while Philipia was changing. Although his inner demons was ttelling him to go inside, lock the door, and take her when he still has the chance, his inner angels(?) were reprimanding him, scolding him for being shameful and perverted all the while telling him to behave and stay still. Two creatures were in a dilemma when the door opened and Philipia finally came out.

Thank goodness.

Canada breathe a sigh of relief and led Philipia towards the helicopter that they used.

“Heyyyyyyy!”

Australia came running before stopping to catch his breath. “Bro told me to give this to you,” he said and handed Philipia her phone.

“Oh, I almost lost another one.”

Australia laughed, “Hahaha I know. That's why I had to make sure to give it to you, though, there's a bit of a scratch at the back. I can help you buy a new one if you'd like.”

Canada immediately intercede, “I know a company that sells amazing phones, I can get you the newest one with a discount.”

Philipia hurriedly declined. “No! No! It's fine! I'm fine. Thank you for your offer, but I'm good with this one.”

“Are you sure?” Canada was skeptical, “It's really cheap, you'll be able to buy it or I can give you a loan if you want.”

“Oh yeah, I can give you a loan too, pay me whenever you feel like it~”

Philipia was about to have a headache. “No, really, I'm fine. Thank you, both of you. It's just a phone. As long as it still works it's fine.”

Australia clicked his tongue. “You have to change that kind of mindset. Why settle for less when you can have more? Why settle for an old and broken phone when you can buy a new one that will last long and doesn't easily scratch?”

Philipia thought that it made sense. She has her own money and she can just buy another one if she wants.

“Great, that's settled, I'll call him and order a phone for you, what color do you want?” Canada takes out his phone.

“Anything's fine really. I'll trust you on that instead. I'll pay you back.”

Canada suddenly felt like he was given a mission. “Alright! Don't worry, leave it to me.”

Philipia waved good-bye to Australia who watched them leave. She looked at the place that was getting smaller and smaller as they ascended from the ground.

It was a short but unexpected discovery.

Canada sat besides Philipia, their hips and legs were stuck together. Because the helicopter New Zealand chose was small, a big man like Canada occupied almost one and a half space of the seat. Although he can choose to seat at the back and let Philipia sit at the front, he didn't want to be away from her, especially when she's this close.

He creeped his hand closer and intertwined with her fingers.

Philipia was focused on viewing the scenery outside at first when she felt a tickle on her palm and her hand was held. The perpetrator didn't even bother to be subtle and directly, as if naturally, intertwined their fingers together.

Philipia blushed and couldn't help but glare at the leader beside her, albeit lacking any anger or malice. It was just like a soft complaint which caused a ripple inside Canada's soul.

“Why are you holding my hand? Let go.”

“If you don't like it, you can shake my hand away.”

Philipia stared at their intertwined fingers and thought how pretty it actually looks. She hesitantly moved her fingers and closed her hand, reciprocating his action.

“Why aren't you shaking my hand away?”

Philipia pouted while looking outside the window, “Your hand is warm.”

“Oh, so you can use it as a hand warmer then.”

“Hmm...”

Canada started at her bulging cheek. Her intention to ignore him was as clear as day. He chuckled at first before laughing.

Philipia was confused why he started laughing. She was about to face him and ask when he suddenly placed his forehead against hers and stared deep into her eyes.

“I loved you,” he confessed.

Philipia's heart stopped for a second. Her mind blanked out and processed his words, which took a moment to digest. Seeing her daze expression, Canada smiled. His lips parted, showing his teeth. “I said I loved you.”

Philipia snapped out of her stupor and backed away, yanking her hand from his hold. “Is that for Filipia? If so, she can't hear it.”

Canada shook his head and pulled Philipia in his embrace. Due to the small and limited space, Philipia didn't fight back.

“I know. That's why I said I loved you.”

It was only then did Philipia realize the difference. “Oh...” she said, “and so? Why are you hugging me? Why are you holding my hand?”

Canada brushed her hair while patting her head. The soft strands flowed like silk between his fingers, it was delicate and bouncy. Each stroke was like the fire in his heart, growing.

“Nothing... I just wanted to hug you.”

Philipia eased her body and relaxed her muscles. She allowed Canada to hug and hold her hand as much as he likes. It was only this time because of what he did for her, and if it was Australia or New Zealand here, she would've done the same—that is, if they're the same as Canada who acts on his instinct and thoughts.

But France though. She was sure she heard France's voice. It felt like forever the last time she heard him. But it didn't matter. They weren't close, and she was pretty sure he said something about eating towards Filipia.

Unknown to Philipia, a disaster had taken place in Tethyria. Specifically, at the academy.

The banner which started the war had risen once again.

———————

The pilot: (• ▽ •;) I am an illusion, I am invisible.

Chapter 54 : What's Peace When There's No War?

Please don't spoil (个_个)

There was a sea of fire. The sky had turned gray, the air was sickening, the water was murky, and life seemed to have ceased to exist. The only thing that existed in this world now were these flames. The heat was so intense it burned even the eyes. It felt as if all the flesh would melt away at any moment.

"I've never seen such an awful sight."

Everyone was speechless, unable to do anything but look on in shock. A massive crowd had gathered near the edge of the city, watching silently from afar, the school that used to stand so proud and mighty had turned into nothing but a pile of debris and ashes.

The flames were merciless. It destroyed, ate, swallowed everything in its wake; indiscriminately killing thousands of innocent lives. Lives that had yet to bloom, lives that were pure, lives that brought joy and hope. But now, everything was gone. Gone like the ashes carried by the wind, hoping it could bring it somewhere safe, somewhere far away.

The scene replayed itself over and over again as they stood there, watching with their hearts sinking deeper each time. Everyone kept saying the same words: "It's impossible... How? Why?"

How did this happen?

It was okay a few hours ago. Why? Why did the school, the symbol of equality... Disappear?

Philipia knew this would have happened sooner or later, maybe she

could have prevented it; maybe she would have been able to save them.

Save him...

When the helicopter flew above Tethyria, a mountain of fire could be seen. Seeing the thick mass of smoke, Philipia's heart was shaken to the core. From her head to the tips of her toe, she was cold-cold all over-colder than when she discovered Perla's body, colder than she discovered that basement.

"What's going on?!" Canada opened the mic to the headphones.

The pilot replied uncertainly, "There seems to be a fire."

"No shit, I see that! But... but why is the fire coming from the academy!?"

Below the helicopter amidst the open fire. Hundreds and thousands of people were affected. It may look small from above but it was actually more than a fraction of Tethyria.

The bombing started at the sea and as if the bomb was moving, it exploded one after another till it hit the academy.

The smoke looked eerie yet beautiful. It was like looking at a volcano eruption, and every stories pertaining eruptions were due to the gods wrath.

The earth was scorched and heaven fell down as if kissing it, soothing it's pain and anger.

Death roamed the mortal realm as it searched for more souls to deliver.

Tethys stood at the rooftop of his office-or should he call- his second home, and looked at the far distance where he could see the towering smoke. It was like the devil's hand reaching above, hoping to be accepted back into heaven.

To think they'd use bombs... On his territory.

"Cowards," he gnashed his teeth. He turn to his heel went back inside.

"Sir! You can't go there yourself! I'll send a group of our men and help assist the situation!"

Tethys' steps were heavy. He felt like the stairs were too long and the elevator was taking its time. He needed to go there himself, he needs to see the situation they are in, he needs to see his friends, but more importantly- his Philia!

"There is more than just students in there!" He exclaimed, facing his secretary. "There are leaders there, do you what happens if half of those leaders die?!"

The secretary didn't reply. Even if he didn't, Tethys knew he knows the answer.

"But sir, if we lose you too..."

Tethys resumed walking and decided to use the stairs instead. He ran down each steps with a heavy heart and soul. Every second he's wasting here meant every second a life is taken.

When he reach the ground floor, there were a lot of men in their dark green suit. They held their weapons and pointed it towards the entrance while blocking his way. The secretary immediately stood in front of him in a protective posture, taking out his own gun.

"What's going on?!" Tethys exclaimed.

One of the men replied, while gritting his teeth and sweating beads, "There's a leader, sir! He brought an army and began invading the city!"

Another one also said, "At first, he started killing at the west city, then he slowly advanced towards us, sir! Please go back and get somewhere safe! This man killed everyone... Even children were no exceptions!"

Tethys heart began to race. He swallowed his own fear to expand the safe zone of others, to become the stoic leader they deserve. His

marks began to glow a beautiful aquamarine color. It slowly climbed from his legs and upwards.

Tethys took a deep breath and commanded each and one of them. His men were hesitant at first, and they wanted to get their leader somewhere safe but he refuse, he refuse to leave them behind which increased their moral support.

Tethys can hear the sound of gunfire outside the building, through the glass he can see the thick smoke raising, forming into a shape of a Lycoris flower.

He went outside, followed by his panic-stricken men who were all worried for his safety. Even though their leader is strong and a powerful man, but the monster raging outside was even more terrifying. One of them who saw it couldn't stop his body from trembling, just from the pressure it exude, from the fear that strikes every nerves of his body, he can deduce that someone was as terrifying as a monster-No, calling it a monster is too light-what's more terrifying than a monster?

"Fear is natural and it's there to keep you alive, yet it has been weaponised and turned into a cage. Don't you think so? Continent leader, Tethys." A raspy voice had a deep timbre, the kind that anchors your soul a single moment in time. The kind that could trick anyone from falling. It was seductive which can make someone's ears tickle.

The capital of Tethyria was now engulfed in darkness. It was like the start of an apocalypse. Tethys might've stayed too long inside the building because the moment he stepped foot outside, his lungs was attacked by sulfur, making it hard to breath, causing him cough and remove his marks to decrease the sensation.

He looked at Martial standing from afar. There was an army of soldiers standing behind him and they were holding one kind of gun.

An Armalite M16.

Martial smiled. It was a simple and genuine smile, but it gave

everyone who saw it, a shiver in their spine.

Amongst the smoke and fire, this man was standing with a straight back, his hand casually in his pocket, donning a sincere smile. He looked like an angel, his face was kind and friendly, and the air around him felt comfortable.

Except, the angel was a devil.

"Martial! Do you know what you're doing?! Do you know you're starting a rebellion?!" Tethys exclaimed. His voice ringing in the silent and now empty city. There was only the sound of sirens from the distance and the cackling of the fire.

Martial placed a hand under his chin, as if in deep thought, as if he was just in school and was given a question. "Hmmm... a rebellion? I don't know, that sounds too unpleasant, let's call it a revolt instead, yeah?"

"Martial!!"

Martial laughed. It was child-like and genuine, it fit his face and image.

Tethys clenched his fist and his marks appeared once more, he swallowed down the urge to cough when he accidentally breathed in too much smoke. The sudden appearance of it increased everyone's fortitudes. His men suddenly felt an overwhelming courage and a burst of strength. They wanted to vent and let it all out and the enemy before them was just perfect.

Martial watched with great interest. His eyes brightened in amusement of the situation. "I want to see it. Your power," he said as he took a step forward, intending to fight alone while his soldiers obediently stayed.

Tethys knew something was wrong and he didn't want to risk it. He looked at his soldier's faces, trying to discern any sort of reaction. But they remained stoic and pokerfaced, as if they didn't care or they have an undeniable trust to their leader.

"What's wrong? Why aren't you moving? Come on, I'll fight your

men hand-to-hand." As he said that, he takes out his golden gun, drop it, and used his foot to push it towards them.

Tethys clenched his fist so hard blood seeped out. The sensation of being trapped increased. Alarms kept blaring in his head, screaming, telling him to run!

The desire to escape skyrocketed. He peered at Martial again: He stood in the middle of a clearing, far away from his soldiers while he can immediately order one of his men to take him down. But something was wrong, Martial looked too relaxed, too casual. He couldn't tell what, exactly but goosebumps rised all over his skin.

"I'll go," he said with a firm tone.

His secretary snapped his head at his leader and said, with strong resistance, "Sir! Please let one of us go!"

"Are you doubting me?"

The secretary was taken aback. How could he? How could he doubt his leader? He pledged his loyalty, his trust, his faith to this great being.

The secretary dropped to his knees and begged, "Sir, you cannot go."

When the secretary fell to his knees, everyone imitated his action. They all begged their leader.

Martial watched the play unfold before him. "What shall it be?"

Tethys grimaced and couldn't look at his men, his guards, in the eyes. He knew-they knew, they can't win. The moment Martial didn't bother to hide his overwhelming power, they knew they have lost. That is why they were begging their leader to escape.

The last time Tethys felt this helpless was when his Father selfishly opened the border for the predators to plunder and destroy, leaving a massacre in its wake. His Father told him it was a test; a test that will determine if he was fit to be a leader, and he passed, barely.

But now, despite everything he went through, despite the endless nights and mornings, they all burned into the ground. Leaving nothing, not even a speck of dust.

After what felt like forever, Tethys spoke with a heavy and indignant voice, "Protect me."

Martial's smile grew even wider. The moment his words fell, they immediately advanced towards the enemy. Martial was still calm and easily fought against more than five people at once.

The secretary pulled Tethys out of the battlefield and hurriedly went back inside the building and brought him to the rooftop. On the rooftop was a helicopter ready for take off, all it was missing was a pilot.

"You..." Tethys still wanted to say something but the secretary didn't even give him a chance and quickly closed the door after he got in. He took one last look to his leader, bowed with great reverence before going back in the building and fight alongside his brethren.

Tethys gritted his teeth. The frustration tearing his insides and the guilt crawling on his back like a snake.

Down below, Martial watched the helicopter fly away. He never intended to chase after him anyways, let the fake run on their own.

When the secretary came back, he saw the scene of slaughter. It wasn't even that long when he disappeared after making sure their leader escaped. He immediately ran back without missing a beat, but why?

How come they're all laying on the ground in their own pools of blood. What happened to the time he wasn't here? Wasn't it just a few minutes?

Martial turned his head to the only remaining person. He stood at the entrance of the building, now left abandoned, alone. He stared at the corpse of his brethren, one by one, naming them in their heads and recalling the times they've spent together.

Martial thought it was funny. "Hahaha. Your face looks weird."

Unspeakable fear overcome the secretary.

There's only one thing to do in this situation.

He bolted. Not even a second later, rains of gunfire started firing at his direction. He heard the staccato of multiple feet running after him. It came after him like a wave, desperately, he weave around the alleys and corners of the city. He should be able to hide and buy some time. He was born and lived in this city, he knew the in's and out's like the back of his hand. This decision slowed them down significantly and created a gap.

"Ahh!!"

All of a sudden, when coming out of an alley, he was tackled to the side by a citizen. "I am not an enemy! I'm a servant of sir Tethys!" But his words were ignored, the citizen came out one after another and firmly locked him on the ground. At first, he was confused and thought of the possibility of spies and traitors, but when he saw small children and senior citizens, he finally realized something was wrong.

He turned and looked at their faces devoid of emotion. It wasn't like the soldiers that looked normal and gave an air of solemnity, but instead gave him the feeling of something unnatural.

As if they were being controlled against their will.

He recalled a certain information he read about Armageddon Tethys asked him to investigate. The power to control against anyone-it wasn't like an alpha's order where they person can still fight back-but it was full dominion against someone's will and morality.

The crowd dispersed and made way for Martial who appeared unbothered. He glanced at the poor secretary being held down by the citizen they swore to protect. "It's pointless. Struggling is futile. Your leader? He'll die knowing he left you behind and soon guilt will eat his insides."

The secretary yelled, "Our leader isn't weak. He isn't a coward!"

"Sure. Whatever you say." Martial was too lazy talking to someone

who refuse to understand and glanced at the little girl who looked about 8 or 9 years old.

The little girl jolted, as if her strings were moved, and went to Martial who handed her a small gun. Seeing his actions, the secretary struggled with all his might. But strength of the people behind him were too strong he can only wail like a pig ready for slaughter.

"I remember teaching my sister how to hold a gun. She was a fast-learner, how about you? Are you a fast-learner?" He flicked his finger and the little girl held the gun with ease and practice. She lifted her small hands holding the gun and pointed it to the secretary's forehead.

He started at the muzzle of the gun and to the innocent face of the child. If this child knew what she had done, what would she feel?

"You devil! She's a kid!"

Martial smiled amiably. "And so was my sister and me."

The secretary was taken aback by his answer and didn't know what he meant, but before he could dwell deeper, his life was taken by a bullet to the head.

The moment the trigger was pulled. Everyone regained clarity and saw the right hand man of their leader lifeless on the ground. There was a huge hole on his forehead and the gun was held by a little girl. The little girl woke up and her expression morphed into shock. She was left frozen in place as the gun fell from her hands.

Everyone reeled back, some of which threw up on the spot. They all knew what they were doing but they couldn't control their body. They all peered towards the man behind it and felt angry, but their anger was nothing compared to their fear. They have lived in peace for so long, the shadow of the autumn massacre was still fresh in their mind and now, a war was coming.

Another war was coming...

Martial watch their expressions with pleasure and thought how

pathetic they look. They speak and debate about peace and the history of wars between leaders when they weren't there to experience it. It makes him feel sick to the stomach and had the urge to make them swallow a bomb... Actually, that isn't such a bad idea.

He then ttakes out his golden gun and didn't even hesitate to shoot the back of the little girl's head.

Everyone was left speechless before a shrieked broke out. A woman came running to the center and hugged the small body of the child, crying and shaking her lifeless form. The mother looked at Martial with resentment, her tears stained her face. "Monster! You monst-"

Her words were cut off by bullet. Martial clicked his tongue in annoyance and complained, "Fucking noisy." He turn to his heel and saw one of his soldier came running to him and gave a report regarding the situation at the academy.

His annoyance was quickly washed away when a 'good' news came. He glanced at the corpse of the secretary and couldn't help laughing out loud. "What was the point of it all then?"

The soldier waited for Martial to finish laughing before giving another set of report, "Miss Philipia just arrived and she's now at the academy."

Martial nodded and grinned. "Great timing. I was just about to look for her." As he was about to leave, he paused and ordered, "Almost forgot. Kill them."

Hearing his words, the people behind who didn't dare move, cried and begged. Their voices mixing and becoming incoherent.

Martial was left unmoved and specified, "One bullet per head. Make it quick and swift," he said as he peered his eyes at the little girl's corpse, "Make sure they don't feel any pain."

"Understood."

At the academy, the whole buildings collapsed and corpses of students loitered around. Greg would pick up anyone he saw and

pull them away from the fire. His lungs was filled with smoke but he didn't care, he didn't stop going back and forth, trying to save anyone he can save.

The others were in the same perilous situation but they still dragged and pulled anyone.

"I found more!" Egypt came running out of the fire while carrying three people on his back. They immediately came and helped him settle them down and it wasn't even a second later before he stood up and ran back inside.

When philipia arrived, she saw the destruction of the school. She saw many of them sobbing and trembling in fear, knowing well what they have experienced and hasn't gotten over the fact that they escaped death.

Canada planned to go back after dropping Philipia off, but after seeing the scene before him. His eyes roamed around and saw America leaning on a debri while Nepal was helping him bandage his legs.

"Ame!" he called and ran over, kneeling besides him. "Are you okay?! What happened?!"

America groaned while holding his shoulder. When the explosion happened, he was lucky enough to avoid being crushed to death. "As you can see bro, we're fucked," he grimaced.

Canada sweep his eyes on the wreckage. America's statement didn't seem so far off. "It's Martial, isn't it?"

America hissed in pain, saying through gritted teeth, holding back a scream from escaping his mouth, "Who... the fuck else!?"

Nepal looked for a stick and wrapped it with the bandage to prevent his leg from bending, and aggravating the injury even more. America wasn't crushed to death but his legs did. It was bent in the wrong way, the bones burst through his skin, the white in contrast against the blood. "We need someone to heal you, where's your mother?" He asked.

America cringed at the thought of his mother and shake his head. "Fuck no! Anyone's better than her!"

Canada heard Nepal's words and couldn't help darting his eyes back to the female leader with him. It didn't take long for him to find her, she was still standing in the same place, frozen in fear as if the scene was too overwhelming.

Nepal saw Canada's movement and followed his line of sight. He scrutinized Philipia for a second before frowning, he asked, "What happened? What did you do?"

Canada never thought Nepal could be so sharp. When he heard his question, he immediately thought of what happened today and what she saw in their basement. He swallowed hard and answered, "It's a long story."

Nepal studied Canada's expression and no longer pried.

America was confused. Because of his injury, he couldn't move, and can only remain on the ground while leaning on a wall that was once part of the school so he didn't see Philipia.

Canada stood up and went to Philipia's side. "Philipia..."

"Brother did this." It wasn't a question, it was a statement and she wasn't guessing, she was speaking facts. "War is about to start, Canada. It'd be best to go home and keep your people safe," she warned before walking towards America.

Philipia didn't know what she was feeling. All sorts of emotions were surging in her chest, startling her breathing.

The noise wouldn't go away but she didn't seem to mind it. She wanted to hear it, the sound of their cries, their pain, their frustrations, their fear, their voices filled with rage and helplessness-it played the same melody from back then.

Philipia arrived at America's side. She gaze at his appearance and thought how it was so ironic. Before, they were in the same state but the situation this time was reversed. This time, he was the one who was helpless, he was the one who was in pain, he was the one

who was suffering.

Dark negative thoughts occupied every part of Philipia's head. She seemed to have heard Martial's voice, whispering in her ear, telling her the things that they did and how they deserve to die, they must suffer ten times the torture that they gave.

Nepal and America were staring at Philipia. At first, American wanted to say something but Nepal covered his mouth and shut him up. His eyes never straying from Philipia. He can feel all her doubts and hesitations. One moment there was a surge of killing intent, then the next moment there was nothing. Like someone was fighting against their urges.

America nervously looked at Philipia. It had been a long time since he was this close to her. The scent of sampaguita disappeared but a strong smell of mint invaded his nose. Amidst the smoke and sulfur, it was strong enough for him to detect.

"Where does it hurt?" Philipia asked, her throat was parched and dry as if she hasn't spoken for a long time.

Nepal removed the cloth covering America's leg, exposing the disgusting gash. If it was anyone else, they would've gagged from the sight.

Philipia kneeled and placed her hand on the wound, her fingers touching the protruding bone.

Who knows what she was thinking just now, but Nepal was glad she didn't give in to her urges. He knew about what happened between them and he was worried. Vengeance isn't necessarily the answer to her pain.

Philipia took a deep breath and tried to recall how Filipia would force herself to heal someone despite not being baptized.

The tips of her finger grew hot and felt her marks slowly appearing.

The green and blue color swirled. Like the only light in the dark. Everyone's attention was already at the female leader when she came and everybody knows female leaders can heal.

Once her marks began to appear America's marks responded which startled him. He wasn't controlling it but it came out on its own.

When her marks and his marks connected, he felt a burst of fire as if someone was burning his legs.

"Ahhhh!!!!" he screamed.

Nepal had to hold him down to keep him from moving. Canada also came to help and watched as the skin began to repair itself. He once saw his mother heal someone before and he was fascinated by it, but in exchange, the pain will transfer to the leader and will have to reciprocate as her body heals itself.

When it was over, Canada worriedly glanced at her leg and saw nothing was wrong, but he still asked, "Are you okay? Are you hurt?"

Philipia didn't feel anything aside from a slight tingling sensation. "No, I'm okay."

Canada saw that she was really okay and finally breathed a relief.

After healing America, Philipia went to heal the others.

Nepal slapped America awake making sure he didn't pass out. "How many fingers am I holding?"

America groaned. "Five...?"

Nepal nodded and checked on his leg again. Aside from the pants, which he had to tear, stained in blood, the skin and other injuries on his body disappeared. It wasn't just the leg, she healed his whole body.

"Will she be okay? I once read that female leaders can heal one person at a time." America couldn't help but say. He gazed at the youth healing one person after another without rest, she didn't even say anything after healing before proceeding to the next, wasting no time.

Nepal looked at America like an idiot but didn't say anything. So

stupid.

Philipia walked around and healed anyone she passed through, even if they only have a few cuts and bruises. They thanked her but she didn't respond. After healing, she would get up and heal the next person she sees.

"Glad you could join the party."

Philipia spun. Among the ruins, USSR was sitting on a huge debri of concrete. This close, she couldn't help but notice parts of his hair had turned gray. Exhaustion lined his soot-streaked face. There were no fluctuations in his eyes, just a sign of fatigued. He gave the impression he was used to this type of things.

"Before you go, can you heal these two?"

Philipia had been focused on USSR and didn't notice the two other people. On the ground were Third Reich and NATO. Knowing their past and history, it felt unnatural seeing them together and the fact that he saved them.

The tone of his voice was calm with no wave. As if he was simply asking about the weather or has she eaten lunch. For a moment, she felt pity.

Philipia agreed. Not that she was going to decline; she would have done so anyway since the two association looked awful.

The smoke and dust swirled. The marks appeared and they responded to her. Burst of heat flowed over to them as if being burned in their sleep. The light sank and their ragged breathing became easier.

NATO shifted, his expression eased, and he found the strength to sit up on his own. He gave Philipia a grateful look, before glaring at USSR.

"I didn't need your help." he said gruffly.

USSR scoffed, "You're welcome by the way."

"Is that so?" He snapped. "Then get going and help someone else. Or are you just gonna watch the others die?"

USSR shrugged and leaned back using his hands as support. "My body's too sore. Who told you to eat so much you weighed more than a horse."

NATO gnashed his teeth in anger before he realized something. He scrutinized the man from head to toe before turning to Philipia and said, "Heal him."

This time, USSR reacted disgustingly. "What the fuck? Mind your own business you damned compass."

NATO ignored his banters. He leaned against the wall and circulated his breathing. Seeing such attitude, USSR felt like punching the guy in the face, but before he could put it into action he felt a burst of heat, and snapped his head at Philipia.

But Philipia had already left after healing him. He watch the youth busying herself and couldn't help but feel embarrassed, acting like a kid in front of his student.

Philipia was healing a female student whose stomach was imapled by metal tube, beside her is a male student who was probably her lover. She pulled the tube out and healed her stomach, causing her to cry out in pain from the effects.

She didn't know why or is it even normal, but Philipia didn't bother dwelling into it. As long as it does its job, she wouldn't hesitate to use it.

Philipia had finished healing the girl when she heard a commotion not far away, two figures stumbled out. Jack appeared with a man draped over his back.

Philipia checked the girls condition and only after confirming she was okay and was only unconscious, she stood up and meet with the two.

Jack was surprised to see his niece but he quickly went to another area where the smoke and fire wouldn't reach them and place the

man on the ground. Philipia saw that it was North Korea. His brows were furrowed and struggled to wake up; not only that, his back had a huge gash.

Jack coughed and wheezed as he tried explain, "South is still inside, we were separated by the fire on the second floor I could only take North out."

"S-South," North muttered. His body shifted uncomfortably before coughing up blood.

Philipia was also worried for South's sake but it didn't show on her face.

South will be fine, he'll be fine... Right?

After comforting herself, she kneeled on the ground and healed North's wound. His body trembled at first before melting in ease when the skin began to repair itself. Aside from the blood, his back was as good as new.

North groined, eyes opening and saw Philipia. He looked around in a sleepy confusion before regaining clarity. "South! Where's South!? Where's my brother?!"

Jack replied, "He's still inside with Germany and Greece."

Philipia listened to their conversation and couldn't help but imagine the worst things possible. Her calm and unpreturbed mind formed a ripple, and her heart began to accelerate.

He'll be fine. He's with Greece and Germany, they're powerful and can get out alive with him.

They have to get out alive with him!

Jack saw North's and Philipia's solemn expression. A heavy sigh shuddered through him. "I'll go back," he said and a few volunteers came with.

The next hour passed like a decade. Poland, Greenland, Sweden, and Mexico also appeared, carrying and dragging injured students

with them. Arabia, Iceland, and Italy also survived but Italy was in serious condition that Philipia took half an hour to heal him.

Egypt and Nepal helped Philipia with the patients. Although they couldn't heal and can only do emergency treatments, they were still a big help.

Antarctica arrived with ambulances and fire fighters. Before the explosion, he went out with his brother Arctic Council to the mall, and was lucky enough to avoid the explosion; even so, they weren't idle.

The explosion was so big they felt the ground shake to its core. They immediately called a team of ambulances and fire fighters, but they were still a bit late.

Three hours in, the fire had ceased but the smoke continues to raise. Canada saw the shape it formed and his heart dropped to his stomach.

"It can't be..." His voice trembled and his eyes dilated. He was about to find Philipia when he heard a heartrending cry.

Greece and Germany got out alive, But in Greece's arm, a bird whose white feathers now covered in soot and ashes, lay asleep. He cradled Athena in his arms, tears falling from his eyes like raindrops.

"Athena!"

Far from his usual arrogant and obnoxious self. The leader who was once a child, now an adult, looked at the limp bird in his embrace with tears in his eyes and said, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry Athena, I'm sorry!"

He buried his face on her belly, he used to do this when teasing the bird. It was his favourite habits to pass the time and he loved the warm feeling on his face, but now the warmth was gone replaced by a chill.

Anyone who heard his muffled cry would feel uncomfortable.

Emotions are uncomfortable.

Canada felt his pain. He felt his throat constricting and swallowed it back down. He scanned around and saw Germany, sitting not far from where Greece is. He went to his side and asked, "What happened?"

Germany didn't spare Canada a glance but replied with a raspy voice, "Athena helped us escaped, but her wings got trapped and..." After that, Germany couldn't speak anymore. His expression morphed into grief, his lips quivered and his eyes instantly welled in tears.

Germany curled on the ground and descended into stammering incoherence. "South... and he..." He gasped, "Him and Athena...I'm sorry."

From those words alone, Canada already knew the answer. His eyes sweeped along Greece to Philipia. Her back was facing him and saw, not far from where she stands, two people were on the rubbles, one of them embracing someone.

Philipia could no longer hear anything. The noise that she wanted to hear turned muffled, it wade and vanished like her hope. From every parts of her body to the tips of her hair, she felt cold all over, plunging into the darkness. Her eyes rapidly blinking as she tries to process everything. In her world of silence, she can only hear her heart. It was beating but she felt dead, she was breathing but the air stagnate.

South was hugged by North. The twins that were separated from each other during childhood, reunited; but one of them didn't stay, one of them had to leave. North was silent, but it was this silence made it even harder. It would've been better if he screamed, yelled, or thrashed around-but he didn't.

South's body was now cold, even if Philipia healed him, it wouldn't work-because she tried. She placed her hand on his chest the moment they came out with Germany and Greece, But his marks didn't repond, his body didn't heal; not even the most tiniest scratches on his skin healed.

"Brother, don't go... I'll cut my hair, you said you'll cut my hair, right? You said it's annoying-I get it. I'll let you cut it, so don't go." His voice was soft and gentle.

It was as if he was back to being a kid, he was once again that small kid who was dependent on his sibling.

"Brother, wake up." He said, almost as if he was pleading.

North buried his face on South's chest. He can pick up scent of sulfur but also his unique smell. He pressed even harder, hoping he can feel even the tiniest sound of a heartbeat.

But there was nothing.

"Don't go, brother." He said.

The ruler of the land of the morning calm had passed away.

"Don't go, brother." He said again, like a broken casette tape.

North removed his face off of South's chest, his face covered by his hair that was now ruffled. His nose and his lips are the only thing that could be seen; as a result, a line of tear slid down.

———————

South! Don't go! I'm scared!!

Tsk, seriously, it's just a spider!

Waahhhh...!!!

Okay! Okay! Don't cry, your ugly face becomes even uglier.

I'm ugly?

Yeah you are! Hahahaha!

If I'm ugly then you're ugly! We're twins!

Oh right, then you're handsome!

Hmp! You're so stupid, South!

Huh?! You were the one crying because you saw a spider!

Hmp!

Okay, fineeeeee-hey, your hair's getting longer.

I like my hair long.

You look like a girl.

I like it!

Cut your hair! Geez!

No!

Fine!

_____

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Chapter 55 : There's no place like home

Martial came down from the helicopter and strolled through the city. Occasionally, he would stop and watch a group of medic reviving someone or someone's house burning to the ground. He fiddle with his phone in his pocket before resuming his casual stroll.

It didn't take long for the academy, now a wreckage, appear in his sight. Usually you get to see the grandfather clock and the beautiful gate, but now it was gone. The clock disappeared and turned into a mountain of trash and rubbles. The gate? Martial chuckled.

The gate was nowhere to be seen. Who needs one anyways? Weren't the people here so proud of their low crime rate? Thus, he removed the gate, including everything inside because he felt bored.

Ah, it's so boring.

Martial arrived at the academy and saw a lot of survivors. Not bad, not bad at all.

He sweeped his eyes in the crowd before he saw the person he's looking for. A smile made its way to his lips. Martial took the time to fix his collar, dust his shirt and sleeve, made sure his pants is ironed well, and checked his shiny shoe for mud or blood.

He strode across the rubbles and debri, his light steps and relaxed manner caught the attention of a few students; one of them were Mexico and Poland.

“It's M-Martial...” Poland whispered.

Martial often go into wars against terrorist. He would fly all over in his country, staying in a very backward and isolated village for a few months—maybe a year; he would engage in battle all the time so his senses, despite not using his marks, were sharp. He

undoubtedly heard Poland's whisper but he didn't care, he merely gave him a glance that could make anyone shudder in fear.

Poland received such a gaze and felt the hairs all over his body stand on ends.

Mexico clenched his fist. There was nothing he can do, and even if he did, it wouldn't be helpful.

Martial arrived in about a few steps and stood behind Philipia. The moment he appeared, almost everyone shifted their eyes towards him. Despite receiving so many gazes, he didn't flinch or back down.

“Tsk, tsk, tsk... How sad indeed,” He said with a doleful look. “Anyways, he was bound to die sooner or later, at least he didn't suffer—aside from inhaling a large amount of smoke so his lung's probably full of them.”

Philipia instantly knew it was Martial standing behind her. She wanted to yell and scream, but she didn't do anything. She remained standing in place, staring at South's cold body in North's embrace.

North heard Martial's uncaring remarks. Slowly, he turn his head and stared at the devil; donning a laid-back attitude.

Who knew when it happened. North suddenly attacked Martial with a knife he pulled out from South. Martial wasn't the least bit surprised and even effortlessly fought back; he wasn't holding anything and would use nimble moves with his hand.

North kept stabbing and swishing but kept hitting nothing but air. Martial didn't even put up an effort and was bold enough to directly grab his hand holding the knife, twist it away from him and casually push him away; everytime he does so, he would dust his hand as if he touched something dirty.

It only aggravated North, his resentment bubbling in his chest, stabbing his heart. The exchange only lasted for a minute until Martial moved to Philipia's side.

Philipia didn't even watch the spectacle. Her eyes never leaving South. When North attacked Martial, Arabia placed South on a flat surface of a debri.

When the confrontation shifted to her position, Philipia didn't bat an eye, even as the knife accidentally cut her cheek, blood trickling down to her chin.

Seeing the bright colour of crimson, North's eyes widen, and so did Martial. While North stared at the cut in a daze, Martial gave him a roundhouse kick to the stomach and went to Philipia's side.

North violently rolled against the rubble, dust and ashes flew everywhere.

“Does it hurt?” Martial asked, pulling her by the waist.

Perhaps it was the pain coming from her cheek or the Martial's question, Philipia finally reacted. “Brother, he's hurt. I can't heal him...”

Martial studied his sister's expression for a moment before smiling, it was gentle and loving. “You couldn't?” He asked with patience.

“I can't... You killed him.”

Ever since Martial appeared, the only people remaining in their side were the leaders. The students, albeit commoners and weak, they can feel Martial's strong momentum, especially after witnessing North getting his ass kicked.

Hearing her words, Martial wasn't angry, but instead regretfully saying, “Aw, I didn't mean it.”

Italy could no longer watch and remain at the side exclaiming, “You son of a bitch! You think you can get away with this?! You're only one person while we're a whole faction, you think your stupid rebellion will succeed?!”

Martial gazed at Italy before laughing as if he heard some kind of joke, it was genuinely funny!

Leaning close to Philipia's face, he gently held her chin and licked, quite sensually, on the wound; his eyes never breaking eye contact with him.

Italy felt disgusted, watching someone do such a perverted thing without batting an eye, it makes him sick! As he was about to rebuke him, his eyes widen and his pupils dilated.

The wound on her cheek healed at a fast rate.

They already saw how Philipia heals. Her marks would appear and their marks would respond if you're a leader. But what Martial did was basically the same thing except with the marks nor the sensation of being burnt alive.

Philipia thought of what he said. He perfected and mastered the skills of the yellow eyes, but she never, not even once, thought he mastered to heal!

“Impossible...” Sweden's voice came with a shudder. “How...?!”

Martial hugged Philipia from behind and place his chin on her shoulder, replying, “Oh? That's because you've been lied to your whole life. Only female leaders can heal? Ha! You have to be kidding me.” He formed a circle with his fingers and placed it on his eye with the color of the sun. “As long as you have Armageddon's blood running in your veins, it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman.”

Italy picks up a cylinder metal part of the gate, weighed it in his hand before advancing towards Martial. Unlike North, he wouldn't hesitate even if Philipia was in front of him.

“Tch.”

Because he knew, Martial would pushed Philipia out of the way.

His weapon did not hit or land. When the dust dispersed, Martial had pushed Philipia behind him while his right hand gripped on to the cylinder metal.

“Damn, you're all so fucking annoying.”

As if on cue, the leaders who were strong enough, releases their marks and picked up any weapon, or the weapon that they have, and simultaneously attacked Martial on all sides.

Greg and Jack went away for a moment and came back only to see a battle of six against one.

“Martial?!” Greg said in disbelief. He impatiently looked around and saw Egypt, Nepal, Arabia, Greenland, and the two brothers Antarctica and Arctic Council.

He ran towards them and asked them, “What the fuck is going on?!”

Greenland was being bandage by Nepal while he explained Greg of what had happened, of course, it was Arabia who specified when Martial licked Philipia's cheek, showing how fucked and messed up his brother is in the head.

Greg urged, “We have to stop them!”

Jack agreed and ran towards the battle, ready to stop the confrontation. Martial knew Greg and Jack were here the moment arrived, Greg's voice was so loud he can hear even if he's in the middle of a fight with 6 people; not that he's complaining nor is it straining him.

Just as they were about to come close to him, he made a quick move, grabbed Poland and Germany and threw them at the two approaching figures. Greg and Jack were both startled by two flying leaders and before they could react, they were hit like bowling pins.

“Ahhh!!!”

Greg grimaced in pain, his sight began to spiral like inside a washing machine. He pushed Poland who was trembling and groaning in pain off of him saw Sweden and Iceland rolling on the ground towards them. Sweden quickly caught himself but coughed out blood.

North was thrown across the place and hit his back, with a loud crack on a wall; Italy was laying on Martial's foot, and Greece's legs were dangling in the air as Martial held him by his neck; he choked

and struggled to breath but his eyes were full of hatred.

“Martial! Stop it!” Greg shouted. “You can defeat them now but you can't fight against the whole world!”

Martial peered into Greece's hate filled eyes. “It's nostalgic, I used to have such eyes.” Increasing his strength, he threw Greece towards the direction where North was coughing up blood.

Martial sighed and clapped his hands, getting rid of the dust. “Now then, anyone else?”

“Martial, you're making a big mistake.” This time, it was Jack who said it. “This pointless rebellion will be your doom, it will all be our country's doom.”

Martial raised a brow, chuckling. “Bobo, it's not your country.”

Jack was dejected but still replied, “I may not be part of it anymore but... it's yours and Philipia's. Do you want the only home in this world to disappear?”

Martial sneered. “It disappeared a long time ago, me and Philipia's home no longer exist, only the shell's left.” With that, he kneeled and gave Philipia the most chaste kiss on the forehead. “Isn't that right, Philipia?”

Italy struggled to get up and shouted, “Philipia! Kill him! Now!”

“Good! Kill me Philipia! The moment my heart stops beating, it will send a signal to all the explosives I planted all over the world!”

When the words left his lips, everyone's expression morphed into shock. Dread began to eat their body, this revelation was like a bombshell; so out of the blue it made them feel like walking on tenterhooks.

“I knew it...” Canada appeared out of nowhere, bent down while he catch for his breath. “Where...” He gasped, “Where did you get Lycoris?”

Lycoris or project Lycoris was a bombed he made. It was powerful

and extremely dangerous. You can control how big or the scale you want it to explode. You can even control it to an extremely big scale where you can obliterate a small country. The only downside is that you can't control it's timing. He never got to finish Lycoris or even planned to finish Lycoris. But now, Martial's saying once his heart stops, the bombs will activate which meant he was able to finish what he started, he was able to finish what he couldn't continue.

How!?

Martial gave a smile as if he was being complimented, “Ask your dad.”

Canada had a hunch but it was still disappointing to hear the answer.

“Now that you have your answer,” Martial turned to Philipia. “What about you? Your answer, I'd like to hear it.”

Greece finally found his foothing. He leaned against a debri, “Philipia! South is dead!” His words echoed in her head. “When Athena's wings caught in the fire, South was the one who carried her! He carried her in his arms! And before he breathe his last breath, your name was the only thing that came out of his mouth!” He sniffled.

Martial was starting to grow annoyed. “I should've snapped your neck.”

Philipia was looking fixedly at him. Greece continued to yell, “I love you!” he sobbed, his voice shuddered as he took a deep breath, saying once more, “I love you! South said, with all the strength that he had... I love you!”

Philipia's unfocused eyes finally shone in clarity. “He—”

Before you can say knife, Martial grabbed Philipia's face, release his marks and forced to connect with her; the marks responded almost obediently before he shot the ground with his gun right besides her ear, popping her eardrums, causing her to convulse, falling unconscious; her body fell limp in his arms and he caress her cheek

with the cold surface of the golden roscoe.

It all happened so abruptly and his actions were swift and unhesitant.

“Bastard!” Iceland exclaimed and dragged his heavy, beaten body. “You crazy, physcho...” He stumbled and fell on his knee, but resisted the overwhelming weakness to say, “Philipia loves you with all her heart despite what you did to her! And you this is what you do?! This is why your country fell into ruins!”

“Iceland!” Sweden cried out.

BAM!

There was silence in the air as Iceland fell to the ground, a pool of blood forming beneath him, visible to the naked eye. He choked and his whole body felt cold and hot at the same time.

Sweden hurriedly went to his side and pressed his hands together on the wound. The blood felt slimy and hot ii his hand as it seeps through the corners of his fingertips. “Get a hold of yourself!” He cried.

Nepal and Egypt came to their side as they do a quick medical treatment.

Martial sighed heavily before putting away his gun, ignoring the three. “I think this unecessary drama ends here,” he said and carried Philipia.

Tears fell from Sweden's eyes. He peered at Martial who was walking away with Philipia in his arms. “You won't get away with this.”

Martial paused but didn't look back. “Are you talking about Tethys?”

Canada stared at the unconscious female leader in his arms. Hearing Martial's words, he felt a sense of dread. “What did you do?”

“What I should have done from the beginning...”

His figure soon disappeared along with the heavy feelings. The leaders all loosened their tense muscles.

Greece sobbed and fell to his knees. “Damn it! That bastard will pay! He'll pay for his life!”

Jack sighed and stood up while helping Germany sit properly. “He took Philipia.”

“So it's plan D...” Greg gritted his teeth, scratching his hair in frustration.

Canada sat on a broken concrete and stared into the distance where Martial had left.

North sat against the wall and watched his companions overcome with grief and indignation, his eyes sweeps across their faces, watching Sweden, Egypt, and Nepal try their best to treat Iceland; he looked at Greg and Jack talking in the corner, while the rest were sitting in silence, and he glanced at South's corpse ‘sleeping’ with Athena besides him.

They look so peaceful, as if they were having a good dream.

Why are the most precious and innocent creatures die first?

Probably because the world doesn't want them to be stained by the dirt. So it took them away while they're still pure.

North was unwilling, he couldn't accept it!

People tend to mourn in different ways. Some would mourn and express their grief openly, others tend to be silent and only cry after the information had digested.

North was the latter. His reaction came too slow, and when the realization kicked in, he couldn't stop the ache that he felt in his chest. It gnawed his heart and soul, the acidity climbing his throat, making him feel like throwing up—and he did. He gagged and heave but nothing came out.

His sight blurred like being underwater then it cleared. Ah, it was

just his tears, plopping down like every bits and pieces of his heart.

“I lied...” he heard Greece say, biting his power lip, preventing a cry from coming out. Greece didn't look at him but North can tell he was also crying. He was just curled up like an abandoned dog while his shoulders trembled.

“South asked me to tell Philipia that she's not alone... but the last name he spoke was yours. I'm sorry, I lied.”

“What did my brother say...?” North heard his own raspy and hoarsed voice ask.

Greece sniffled, hiccuping, before turning around to say, “He said...”

As if he could hear it with his own ears. South's weak voice saying: “don't cry for my death. Just look into the mirror and you'll see me.”

Philipia woke up and finds herself in a bed. For a moment, she thought she had a long bad dream, but when she saw the interior of the room she was in, she finally realized she was in an unfamiliar but familiar place.

“Awake?”

Philipia snapped her head to the voice and saw Martial leaning against the window. He wore a white robe that showed off his figure, the lapel wide open, exposing his chest and well-defined collarbones, and his hair was naturally down that had just been through a shower.

“Where am I?”

Martial looked at her in surprise and couldn't help laughing. “I almost forgot, you didn't seem to be ‘awake’ most of the time when Filipia lived here.”

Philipia moved back when she felt something wrong. She pulled the blanket off and saw an ankle chain. Her breathing couldn't stop shuddering. The chain was made of gold, it glittered and shone in

the dark room with only the moonlight as it's light. It wrapped around her ankle perfectly, complementing her well.

Martial looked at her dotingly as he approached. “Welcome home, Philipia,” he said, taking a seat on the bed and caressing her cheeks. “This is all I ever wanted. You don't have to do anything, I'll give you whatever you want, just stay here with me.”

Philipia trembled the moment his hand touched her face. “Home...?” This is her home? This is her country? The country that Filipia lived in?

Martial shushed, “Don't be scared. It's scary at first but you'll get used to it.”

Slowly, her eyes moved away from the chain and to Martial's eyes. A pair of heterochromia stared into each other, the only difference is that the other pair looked dim while the other looked bright. Martial's eyes gleamed in excitement, he couldn't stop shivering when she looked at him.

“Would you like to tour the house? It was Filipia who lived here and you ‘woke’ up in Tethyria so this place must be new to you.” Martial leaned close, pressing his face on her neck, breathing that refreshing minty scent. He absolutely loves it, the scent itself is enough to drive him insane—oh right, he was already insane.

Philipia coiled from his action, flinching as she felt his lips pressing on her skin. “Get away...” She whimpered.

Martial opened his eyes and stop his action. He leaned away and looked at the youth in front of him. Philipia's clothes were changed by the maids, she wore a dark blue nightdress that accentuates her slender figure. The dress was made of satin, looking luxurious and elegant on her.

“I don't want to be here!” She doesn't know why, but Philipia doesn't like the feeling of being here, she doesn't like the fact that she was brought home. Unlike Tethyria, it was warmer and there's no winter.

Outside, the sky had turned gray, covering the stars that shone so bright.

Martial asked, “I'm doing this because I'm taking all your dues. You're here because you belong to this place.”

Philipia shook her head, moving even further away. Martial grabbed the chain and pulled her closer, his action made Philipia fall on her back, bouncing on the soft mattress while her ankle was pulled by the chains, causing the nightdress to slip and expose her legs. She was like an animal ready to be devoured, and showing such resisting expression while in such a pose, Martial's blood boiled to the extreme. All kinds of crazy thoughts screamed in his head, almost snapping his rationality.

“Fuck, you're doing this on purpose are you?”

Philipia didn't know what he meant but she can feel his excitement. She wasn't even doing anything but everything she does is an intimidation. “I don't want to be here.”

Martial crawled on top of her, his other hand rubbing circles on her thighs. “Hmm? Then where do you want to go? Back to South?”

Hearing South's name, Philipia was in a daze. “It wasn't a dream...”

“Of course it wasn't a dream.”

“You killed South...”

Martial grinned, his canine teeth showing. “I did, even though a lot of them survived, He unexpectedly died. The explosion wasn't even that big, I made sure to adjust it just right.”

Philipia's eyes watered. The information sinking in as she tried to hold herself from crying. Martial saw a few tears escaping, the golden color staining the white sheet. He sighed, “Why is your tears still gold? Have your eyes not adjusted?”

Philipia shook his hands and looked away. “You killed my friends... You killed Athena and South.”

“Technically, they got themselves killed.”

“You killed them!” She yelled. “You killed not only South and Athena, you killed many innocent people! You killed them all without batting an eye! You—”

“Speak more and more people will die.”

Philipia immediately shut her mouth. But even if she didn't say anything, the expression that she's making was louder than her voice. Martial could almost hear her complaints and indignations.

He leaned close and cupped both of her cheeks. His eyes glowed like a predator eyeing his prey in the night, on a hunt. “It's scornful, isn't it? How I brainwashed your alter and made her do things, how I forced you and had sex with you, deceived you, betrayed you, played with you...”

Philipia pursed her lips, yet her eyes couldn't look away. She can see a billion crystals forming within his irises, it was hypnotizing.

“I had dreams, many times, having sex with you and how you'll moan and writhe with so much pleasure, how your body responds to mine, how your lips says nothing but my name, how your eyes only have me...”

Philipia didn't want to look anymore. She firmly closed her eyes, her resistance obvious in one look. Martial didn't feel resigned, it only made him feel excited.

“Fine, since you don't want to look at me, you don't need your eyes.”

Martial used his marks to paralyze Philipia beneath him. She couldn't move a single muscle and can only helplessly lay on the bed, defenseless against the devil on top of her. Martial at first, caressed under her eyelid, staring into her eyes before pressing his thumbs and digging it out.

“A....h.....h....aa....”

Philipia felt intense pain but she couldn't scream, she couldn't move

or even struggle. This scene reminded her of that one time Laurasia dugged up her eyes. The pain was so overwhelming, it felt like she was going insane.

“You don't need to see me or look at me. You just have to feel me.”

Mark stood guard outside. He was looking at the distance when the door behind him finally opened after what felt like 5 hours.

Martial came out, his robe wide open showing his torso. His chest and stomach were filled with scratches and splashes of blood and gold. His head was down but Mark can see the smile on his lips. “Sir, is everything alright?” He asked when he noticed Martial's hands covered in congealed gold, almost like a glove.

“Put it back for me...” His weak voice ordered, almost as if he's asking for leniency.

Mark accepted what he handed. He was about to ask what it was when he felt something squishy; it definitely feels fragile, like a slimy jello that's about to disintegrate, but it has its own structure. Mark tried to squish it and felt some firmness in the middle. “Sir...?” He looks down and saw a pair of eyeballs, one yellow and one amber.

Martial chuckled before walking away, leaving the door open. Mark's hand trembled as he stared at the pair of eyeballs in his hand. This separated part of the organ wouldn't necessarily kill you without it, but it can hurt you in the most unimaginable way possible without it, especially if it was taken away while conscious.

Mark took a deep breath before entering. The air was hot and stuffy, he can already tell what had occured in this room. He looks towards the bed and saw the messy sheets and pillows with stains of unknown liquid, blood, and gold.

“Miss?” he called, his voice was consumed by the room that not even an echo was left.

“Go away...”

On the floor by the bed, Philipia was only wearing a shirt which

belonged to Martial. She was curled up, hugging her legs and buried in it.

“Would you like me to help you?”

Philipia looks up, darkness surrounding her world. “Throw it away... I don't need them.” She doesn't want to see all the things that's happening.

Mark breathes heavily. He kneeled and gently pulled her body and gave her a hug. “I'm sorry, there's nothing I could do.” He was also helpless. He's a city and his role is nothing but to follow and obey his leader.

He saw Martial's descent to madness and uncontrollable paranoia, his cruelty, his impulse, his darkness, his mercy, and his love for his sister. He witnessed it all and his heart couldn't stop hurting.

But there was nothing he can do, Mark can only obey and say yes to every order. He can only watch and remain blind to what's happening.

“Throw them away...”

“I can't do that, Miss. These are your eyes.”

“I don't want them.”

Mark released his hold and gently lifts her chin. There was a red necktie made of satin covering her eyes. Mark slowly, gently, removed the cover while readying his heart.

Even though he was expecting, his mind was still shaken by the picture: the place where a pair of beautiful crystals were gone; hollow and gruesome, the pulsing red organ was exposed; blood congealed and stuck to the fabric; ghastly and horrendously gut-churning, but at the same time it was distressing.

Philipia didn't even flinch or reacted. It was as if the pain was nothing, it was as if she had long gone used to it. Mark then saw the traces on her body, and felt repulsed by the certainty.

“Let's wash you first and then... We'll put these away, okay?”

Philipia nodded and let herself get carried by Mark as he called for other servants to help.

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I wanted to write the smut but... After seeing most of your reactions. I decided not to. ფ□ფ I'll leave everything to your imagination.

Chapter 56 : Hell is Home

Vanilla and amber scents wafts in the air. It was hot and stuffy, the air-condition was on full blast but the two bodies on the bed were sweating, panting, heavily breathing for air; the bed creaked loudly and incessantly, small delicate hands gripped on the sheets while rhythmically rocking back and forth. It only ended after half a day where the sun was at its zenith.

The days in the house were like days in purgatory.

Martial sat down on the couch as the servants and maids cleaned and replaced the sheets, holding back their disgust.

Mark stood by the side, reporting his schedule and appointments.

“Cancel these, I'll meet up with the rest.”

Mark nodded and turned to the sound of the door opening. A maid came out from the bathroom while guiding Philipia by the hand; dripping hue blue hair stuck to her body, steam rising out, and the scent of soap filled the room.

Martial was drying his hair with a towel. “Come here, I'll dry your hair,” He solicited.

Mark signalled the maid with his eyes.

The maid obeyed and was about to guide Philipia to Martial, but she didn't budge. She remained standing in place.

The back of the sofa was facing the bathroom, even if Martial wasn't looking, he can tell what was going on. “If you don't come here, that maid will die.” His voice inpreril's the woman's life.

Hearing his words, the maid visibly trembled and looked pleadingly over the female leader. Although she couldn't see—she refuse to put her eyes back—she could feel the servant's fear and trembling hand holding hers.

“No need. I'll come towards you.”

Martial smirked. “Alright. Come here.” He pats his lap while sitting casually with knees apart.

Philipia gave the maid's hand a firm squeeze, reassuring her. The maid's eyes watered and kneeled on the floor. Mark sighed and signalled her to leave.

Philipia walked slowly, but from Filipia's early memories, she can picture the whole structure and its layout. She walked a few steps forward, her hands groping around until she touched the back of the sofa, brushing Martial's nape.

Sensing that soft touch, Martial shuddered and couldn't help holding her hand from the back as he guided her to walk in front. “You're doing that on purpose?”

Mark sensed the atmosphere and swiftly ordered the servants to leave while he guard outside the door.

“Come, sit here.” He pulled Philipia to his lap. Her legs wrapped around his waist and burying his face on her chest, inhaling the scent of the same soap and shampoo that he use. It felt as if he finally conquered her, as if he finally had her in his hand.

“This was all I ever wanted. Just this. You and me, in our own world, our own home. What about you?” He asked, looking up with his chin on her chest, “What do you want?—aside from your friends not dying of course.”

Philipia didn't answer. What can she answer anyways?

“Even if you don't say anything, I know what you want.”

Martial hummed as he rub his face on her chest like a clingy cat. “Just a bit more. Just a bit more...”

Tall stacks of green grass swayed with the wind, the breeze was fresh and cool, the birds chirp incessantly as they circle around; flowers of different kinds that can bloom in a tropical weather danced like fairies; beautiful scenery, and a clear blue sky that

looked endless. Philipia was sitting in a palanquin by the lake, her reflection can be seen; melancholic air with a red satin fabric covering her eyes.

“Would you like me to read you a story, Miss?” A maid asked as she pitifully look over at the female leader.

Philipia shook her head in response. “I don't want a story.”

“Would you like to eat something? You did not eat much this morning.”

Shaking her head again, she responded, “I don't have much appetite.”

The maid sighed in defeat and retreated at the back along with two other maids. They accompanied their leader in the palanquin. Even if she wasn't talking or doing anything, just sitting silently like a hollowed doll, they can feel her grievance like a tide.

Just then, there was a sound of two helicopter from the distance. Because her visuals were gone, her other senses were more sensitive. “Are there leaders coming?”

The maid, who suggested reading her a story, looked up at the sky and replied, “Yes, Miss.”

Two helicopters landed on their landing area, welcomed by servants with Mark. Leading them inside the mansion, to the third floor, and in the room at the end of the hall, Martial was already waiting.

Philipia didn't care at first who came, but realization sinks in. Two leaders came to their country to meet her brother, it can only mean one thing.

The maids were startled when they saw Philipia suddenly stands up, the chair falling from her violent action. “Miss! Are you okay?!”

Philipia groped around and grabbed the nearest maid's arm with so much strength. “Where are they? Are they in the meeting room?”

The maids looked at each other. “M-Miss, please stay calm.”

“Where are my eyes? Where are they!?”

Mark asked the head maid to carry a small container for Philipia's eyes. Although it was weird to carry it everyday, the maid still abide. Mark knew Philipia would ask for them so he had them carry it around.

The maid handed the container to Philipia who reached out. She roughly opened the cover, spilling the liquid everywhere, and hastily scoops one eye and placed it in her sockets as if she was merely placing an eye to a doll.

She felt pain but she didn't care. Once one eye was in, she stood up and removed the satin. Standing up, she sprinted back inside the house leaving the dumbfounded maids behind.

Philipia ignored their calls and voices yelling her name and went straight to the third floor. Her eye healed almost immediately, even though she only placed one eye back in and didn't know which eye color it was, she didn't care, she wanted to know who were the leaders meeting with her brother.

Once she reach to the third floor, she made a beeline to the room at the end of the hall, ignoring the shocked faces of the two men guarding the door.

BAM!

The door slammed open catching everyone's attention inside, cutting off the serious discussion that they had. “Who dare!—” Mark's words were cut off when he saw Philipia leaning on the doorknob while catching for her breath, he hesitantly asked, “Miss, why are you here?”

Philipia's vision was still adjusting. The adrenaline finally receding when she arrived. Lifting her head, she looked at the two leaders in the meeting room with Martial at the head seat

Crystal hue blue eyes that was like sapphires, wearing a well ironed suit; a fur cap with ear covering flaps and a star at the center.

A shoulder length blue hair, tired looking eyes, gnawing on a

lollipop, and a trident on their forehead.

“Mark, send my sister back to our room. She's disturbing a very important meeting.”

Philipia fell to her knees as she stared at the man with disbelief. “Russia...” The name that came out of her mouth felt like knives stabbing her back. The least person she expected to betray someone was sitting in the room. She shifted her gaze to Atlantis and didn't seem to be that surprised. From the very beginning, Atlantis had always been hostile so it felt natural for him to be here.

But Russia was different. “Why?” She couldn't help but ask, although it felt like it wasn't her voice but someone else within her.

“Why, Russia?”

Russia merely glanced at Philipia. The female leader was on her knees with disheveled look, as she stared at him confusingly with doubt and shock. He didn't answer, he simply looked at her for a second, disdaining, “Don't call my name so casually. We're not close.”

Philipia felt a pang on her heart and couldn't but help wanting to cry.

“Tsk, can someone take her away already? We're loosing daylight and we haven't even finished half of the meeting!” Atlantis rebuke.

Mark hurriedly bowed in apology as he helped Philipia stand on her feet. She was looking at Russia the whole time, as if trying to find a fault on his face, trying to distinguish between the authenticity of his words, but his expression remained stern. She couldn't find anything that can tell her that this was all an act and that he was still on their side... But there was none.

Philipia but her lower lip and stood up on her own, pushing away Mark's hand. She bowed and humbled herself, “I apologize for my rudeness earlier. It was my mistake.”

She turned to her heel and left the room. Her back was straight and her walk was steady, as if her disheveled and hurried look from

earlier never happened.

Atlantis clicked on his teeth in annoyance. Russia opened a file and didn't have much reaction.

Martial saw all of their expression and couldn't help smiling. “I apologize for my sister. She's a bit rebellious.”

Russia criticized, “Next time, watch over her, better yet, put her somewhere where she can't disturb other people.”

Martial raised a brow. Curiously, he asked, “Didn't you use to like her? My sister.”

Russia had his eyes on the papers on the table. After hearing his words, he turned his gaze and narrowed them, there was annoyance and contempt behind it. “I like Sunshine... Not your sister.”

Atlantis scoffed. “Hypocrite.”

Russia ignored his comment.

Martial chuckled and nodded. “Indeed, it was ‘Sunshine’ whom you loved. Sadly, she's gone.”

Recalling the letter that was left for him, Russia closed his eyes for a minute before opening them again, stopping his heart from being shaken.

Martial cleared his throat. “Let us continue.”

Philipia was sent back to Martial's room.

“Miss, please stay here.” Mark almost said that like he was pleading.

Philipia didn't face him but nodded. “Sorry, I troubled you and everyone.”

The maid who were assigned to her, looked at each other with sadness on their faces. Mark sighed and bowed. “Please rest, Miss.”

The doors closed, followed by the sound of a click indicating it was now locked from the outside with no way out. Philipia looked towards the windows that was sealed shut, except the balcony, but with men guarding below, preventing her from jumping or even escaping. She took a step but fell with a thud! Her energy was exhausted and felt her legs trembling from the sudden exertion of strength.

“You don't get to cry, Filipia.” Her words were inaudible, despite being the only person in the room. “You don't have the right to cry...” She said again. Plopping sound came, her golden tears fell like raindrops on the carpeted floor.

“Why are you crying?!” She exclaimed. The full body mirror capturing her curled prostating position on the floor. “Is it because you're saddened by Russia?! Is it because you were so stupid enough to believe in him?! Is it because you trusted him?! Is that why?!”

Nobody answered except the feelings that's growing inside that did not belong to her.

“Don't you dare cry! You can't cry! Don't use my body to cry anymore! I'm tired!!”

Her cry was trapped inside the room with no one to listen, no one to hear. She felt like skinning herself and digging out her heart just to relieve the pain. It coursed throughout her body like electricity. The moment she feels that throbbing sensation, she can tell it was heartbreak.

Philipia stood up and ran to the body mirror and stared at her reflection. She only put one eye on her left, and by mere coincidence, she placed the yellow iris back.

Seeing this color almost made her want to tear it apart! As her hands hover over it, she stops. She looked at it more closely and realize her eyes have frozen over like the surface of a winter puddle, robbing them of their usual warmth. She's in there, but it's like she just took a huge step back from life. There was pain inside, but now its visible on her face and wished it would go away. It's a

selfish want, people have a right to their pain, they don't ask for it —it just arrives like the gift you never wanted.

It is a language people who look you in the eyes can understand. They speak in emotion—a language of your soul.

Philipia made a painful whimper, as if someone was hurting her body, someone was hurting her physically. Weakly, she punched the mirror with zero strength. It didn't matter, she simply wanted to vent. “You can't cry...”

There was a soft breeze coming from the open door balcony. It made the red velvet curtain dance like a wave; the sound giving a sense of ambience. Snapping her head, she saw a woman wearing the most darkest of clothes. Her veil danced along with the velvet curtains.

Philipia slowly stood up as she walked over towards the balcony, just a bit farther—about 9 feet apart. The whole balcony can be seen from where she stands, and on the railings that was only 4 inches wide, stood the woman as dark of the darkest night.

Even without a word of introduction, Philipia knew who this woman was. “Lihim...” She spoke her name like a devout believer.

Philipia couldn't see it but she can tell, the woman smiled. Lihim lifted her hand and threw an item towards her. If it was anyone else, she would've evaded it, but this woman was someone who existed for a long time, and she has a feeling that Lihim wasn't dangerous nor did she carry any type of malice towards her.

Philipia caught the item and saw that it was a phone. It was new and still had that plastic cover on the screen.

“Go...”

Lihim uttered that one word before stepping back and falling with her arms spread. Philipia's eyes constricted before running towards the balcony and look down, only to see nothing but a garden. If it wasn't for the phone in her hand, she would've doubted herself and thought she must've been hallucinating. At the same time, she

thought this was normal. After all, someone like her who travels from one place to another without leaving any traces, must have a trick or two to disappear on the spot like that.

Philipia was in deep thought for a moment before she tore the plastic cover on the phone and turned it on.

Meanwhile, the three leaders: Martial, Russia, and Atlantis were having an argument.

Martial spoke with authority in his voice, “Either you scram or obey what I say, Atlantis.”

Atlantis sneered. “In the first place—”

His words were cut off when a loud explosion occured. Martial remained unfazed. “So it's starting...”

Mark ran out. His shouts were loud enough to be heard.

Russia frowned. “Is it them?” He asked as he stood up, pushing the windows aside to see a different area of the mansion on fire.

Martial remained seated with his eyes close, appearing laid-back and relaxed. “Settle down, Russia. It's just a bunch of kids playing.”

Russia knew Martial must've anticipated for this to happen. “Why didn't you do anything to prevent it?”

“Why should I? Have you never played with your food before eating it?”

Russia narrowed his eyes, the crystal blue color reflected against the window. “If I did, my father would've beaten me to death already.”

Atlantis watched their interaction from the side. “Is it really fine for you guys to be so calm right now? Your house is burning.”

Martial smiled. “Don't worry. I have everything under cont—”

The meeting room had window walls. It face the other part of the mansion and has a good view and scenery. But the view was

blocked by a giant metal bird, the doors on its side faces the window with a mini-gun mounted on it. Behind that weapon is a grinning face.

“Salaam alaikum bitch!” Malaysia pulled the trigger and indiscriminately fired the gun. The windows instantly shattered into a million crystals.

“AAHHHHH!!!!!!!!! BANG BANG BANG BANG BANGGG!!!!!” Malaysia laughed hysterically as he fired left and right, up and down. Indonesia standing behind him, looked at him with concern while holding a binoculars.

“Are you allowed to say that?”

It was raining bullets and bullet shells. The walls were pierced, the chairs, furnitures, and other miscellaneous items in the meeting room were riddled with holes and lay helpless as the gun continued on with it's attack.

BANG!

A sharp sound of a gun penetrated the noise. It accurately entered one of the muzzles of the Gatling gun and destroyed it's core, causing it to malfunction and explode.

“Ah! My baby broke!” Malaysia cried while his hand trembled from the aftereffects. He had always wanted to operate such guns! He couldn't believe it only lasted a few minutes!!

“You son of a b—” His mouth was immediately covered by Indonesia from behind when he saw, inside the room with it's original appearance long lost, Martial held a golden gun still emitting smoke. His other hand, between the spaces of his fingers, were bullets he accurately caught.

Seeing this, Indonesia felt nervous and couldn't help shuddering. What kind of monster is he?! But his fear was replaced by shock when he saw the two people standing besides him.

Laos came out and looked outside. “Ireland and Scotland were right... There is a traitor among us, but I didn't expect it would be

him.”

Malaysia already stopped struggling when he saw Russia. His eyes widen in shock before morphing into anger. “You—! Bastard! Traitor!”

Brunei was sitting on the copilot seat with Vietnam, saw Russia by the window on his side. Nobody cared for Atlantis' since nobody even liked him in the first place, his existence didn't even matter to any of them.

Vietnam pursed his lips, his hand gripping onto the cyclic control. “Let's leave... There's nothing we can do...”

The five leaders who heard his words using the SATCOM calmed down. That's right, if he betrayed there's nothing they can do, this is Russia. One of the powerhouses and powerful leaders, nobody can order him around.

“We've done everything that we can. Let's go.” Brunei concluded before rearing the vehicle away, leaving a mess and a demolished room with only three leaders inside.

“What the fuck!? Are they fucking serious?!” Atlantis cursed while wiping the dust from his face. “If you didn't stop me I would've killed them already! See if it's fun to shoot a rain of bullets at them!”

“Even if you did, so what? You have no country to back you up except your dad.” Russia sneered.

“What did you say?!”

Russia no longer spoke. He ignored this immature leader before turning to his heel when he noticed Martial wasn't moving. He mocked, saying, “don't tell me you're in shock?”

Martial remained quiet, but the air around him began to freeze, as if they were standing on top of a snowy mountain. Atlantis, who was closer, felt the chill run down his spine, immobilizing him. It felt like he was standing on the edge of a knife, one wrong move could kill him on the spot. Russia also felt the darkness emanating

from him but was in a better condition.

“Was it not according to your plan?”

Martial's eyes never moved. But after hearing Russia's words, he shifted his gaze towards the building where his room was located. A smile made its way to his lips, but his eyes were not, it was cold—bitingly cold.

“Never thought they'd be bold enough to attack me head on, I have to give it to them. I underestimated them.”

As he was about to move, his breathing was caught in his throat when his eyes glimpsed on a familiar person on one area. From where he stood, on the third floor, he can see the rooftop of the other building with only two floors.

And the one who stopped the man was none other than Lihim. Her dark dress stood out from the fire and smoke.

“Mark!” Martial yelled, almost like a monster about to explode, even Russia was caught off guard and his heart couldn't help thumping.

Mark hurriedly ran inside the dilapidated room and kneeled. “Yes sir!”

“Release all the men that we have, I want you to search the area, leave no place untouched! Find Philipia! Whoever is with her whether they are our staff or not, kill them! KILL THEM ALL!”

Mark was already used to one his flaring mood. Seeing Martial this agitated and angry was like any ordinary Monday for him. “As you order.” He obeyed and sent one order after another.

Russia and Atlantis glanced at each other. They can feel Martial's mood like a volcano about to erupt. Russia also saw Lihim and was surprised, he was curious as to who was this mysterious woman and how can she make, the calm and casual Martial who was the most rational person he ever met, act so irrational?

The mansion where the leaders of the Philippines lived was located

far from the city. Most leaders were like this, they choose to separate themselves away from the bustling city and hubbub of their citizens, not because they dislike it, but because they would rather live away from the public eye and won't put any pressure on them.

Their house was located near a hill, surrounded by a dense amount of trees and by a cliff near the sea. It was quiet and isolated from everybody. Even if it looked open and didn't have much security, it was heavily guarded with each professionally trained soldiers in each area.

Of course, the current situation is a bit hectic. The guards were spread out, boats, helicopters, and vehicles were flying and driving around, scanning the area, looking for their female leader who ran away while their main leader was being attacked. Without being asked or ordered to, they cannot intervene the fight with these royalties. They can only stand at the side and wait for orders.

Not far from the mansion, using the trees, foliage, and nature to their advantage, Philipia and America hid.

When Martial was being attacked, as a screening to distract everyone from her, America came to take her out of that place.

They hid behind a thousand years old Narra tree. It's dense mushroom shape like leaves used as a cover for their escape.

“Damn, how many giant trees like these do you have?”

Philipia was on the ground while putting on her other eye, replied, “They are all Narra trees.”

America looked around and realize that they all look somewhat the similar. Only a few spots of light can penetrate through the gaps of the leaves, making the the whole place look like a landscape that came straight out of a fairy-tale.

Philipia removed the red satin, crumpled it into a ball and threw it far away on the opposite direction. “With this, we'll be able to lose them for a while.”

America followed Philipia in the dense forest where mother nature was at its strongest. Bushes, leaves, and never ending color of green invaded his eyes, but he didn't dislike it; in fact, he was examining the place in awe. “Are there no bears or deers here?”

Philipia blinked but shook her head. “No, and if there was, we wouldn't touch them.”

“The same goes for my country, but a lot of deers die because of road accidents.”

Philipia jumped over a protruding tree root. “Is that so?”

America felt somewhat awkward. He looked at the female leader walking in front. Her steps were hurried and cautious, looking around and perking her ears for any nearby vehicles. “Hey...”

Philipia turned to him. “What is it?”

“Do you feel... Awkward being with me?”

Philipia responded with, “No. Why would I be?”

America scratch the back of his hair. “I... I used to be your other personality's lover.”

That's right. It wasn't that long when America finally recovered his memories. Some parts were blurry, like the war and how it started, but the memory with the youth; her smiling face, her laughter, her voice, her kisses... It was so clear America felt like it happened yesterday.

“I know. Didn't you use to call her Mahal?”

America was flustered for some reason and hurriedly tried to explain. “W-Well, I didn't know what it meant at first! The term would just come out of my mouth and I didn't even know why...”

Philipia reasurred. “Relax, I won't be bothered by it, it wasn't me anyways. I'm not so sure about you though.”

“Huh?”

“This is the face you once adored, right?”

America was speechless. He wanted to explain but he didn't know why he even had to explain, it felt like he was caught cheating!

“That's true, I admit that. She was cute, I mean, you're cute—wait, what I mean is... Although you have the same face, what matters is the inside.” America stated.

“Pfft! Hahahahaha!”

Seeing her laugh, America didn't know how to respond. Did he say something funny?

“What's with that? It sounds so cliche!”

In the forest, the rustling sound of the trees were like a lullaby. It hummed and sung a song of the forgotten. The light that passed through the small gaps of the leaves were like blobs of light that danced and swirled like fireflies. If magic exist, fairies and pixies would've appeared.

America felt like this scenery was quite nostalgic. As if he had once stood in the same place, listening to that person's laughter. Delight filled his heart like honey, overturning the jar full of candies. It was sweet—overwhelmingly sweet.

Unfortunately, the sweet atmosphere was pulled back into reality when Philipia stopped and perked up her ears. Seeing this, America also listened carefully, releasing his marks partially to increase his senses.

From afar, they can hear the sound of multiple people running around, shouting, and yelling.

“Look over there!”

“Don't use a bomb in this area!”

“Can we use our guns?”

“As much as possible, don't! This is a sacred forest. These trees are

older than your great grandfathers!”

“How can we capture them?”

“Kill one of them, that was the order, except for our Miss.”

“Understood!”

Philipia pulled back her hearing, with great solemnity, she said, “This forest isn't really that big, it's no surprise they can catch up. Where are we meeting? Where are the others?”

Truth be told, America and the rest came here unprepared. When Philipia was forcedly taken back home, they didn't had a proper foundation to their plan. They simply, recklessly, stormed into someone else's territory—which was against the law— and kidnapped(?) one of their leaders—a female leader at that. When Philipia asked this question, he can only bluff his way and gave a vague answer, “They said they'll meet us with a boat!”

Philipia thought for a moment. “Then we need to go somewhere that's near the sea,” She said. “Come, follow me!”

Sigh. Great. They made a plan within the plan. Nice job!

They ran through the forest, swatting the leaves blocking their way, jumping over roots and rocks, carefully gliding down a slope, hiding and trying to make less noise as possible; it was an escape where your heart was beating in your throat, your body filled with adrenaline, your mind constantly paranoid; it was dreadful and thrilling with your life on the line.

While running, Philipia mistakenly stepped on air and fell, rolling on the ground, tumbling down as she hit a clump of dirt and bounced head over heels all the way down.

America was shocked seeing Philipia plummeting. His heart almost stopped as he slid down, intending to chase after her. “Philipia!”

There was no reply. Only his own voice responding as it echoed in the forest; a few birds disturbed by this, flew away.

His anxiety kept rising, he didn't even realize the name he called was different. “Mahal!! where are you!”

Still no reply.

“Where are you!?”

“Mahal where are you?! Yell, scream! Call my name!”

He took a deep breath and held on to a tree at the edge of the slope, it's bark was bent and curved. “Philipia!”

Philipia only came to a stop when her body thunked into a rough bark of another tree. She lay limp and her vision was blurry and red. It didn't take much for her to realize that she's bleeding from her forehead.

It was further confirmed when she rolled over and tried to sit up, only to wince in pain and realize her arm hung limply from her shoulders.

“America! I'm okay!” She yelled, comforting the panic-stricken leader at the top.

Hearing her voice, albeit afar, America finally breathed a sigh of relief. “Oh my god. You're okay, you're okay!”

Philipia groaned in pain. She looked at her limp arm and felt her bones and flesh connecting itself. “Don't come dow—”

Her words were too late when she heard a shriek rang out in the forest. America tried to come down but still slipped and rolled downwards like a stone. He also stopped, only to hit another tree not far from Philipia. Luckily, his body and disposition was stronger and was only covered in cuts.

“Fucckkk!” He hissed in pain before wiggling out of his position and stumbled towards Philipia. “Don't do that!”

“I'm sorry. That was my mistake, I wasn't looking.” Philipia didn't know why she immediately apologized.

America felt like scolding the female leader before him, but seeing her sorry figure, the words were swallowed back to his stomach. “It's fine, as long as you're okay.”

Philipia nodded and couldn't help chuckling. “I was probably asleep most of the time when brother was training Filipia. There is some instinct and reflexes left from her, but most of the training she learned are blurry. It's like being a pro shooter in game but a mediocre noob in real life.”

“It's fine. I'm also not a good shooter.”

Philipia divulged, “You don't have to comfort me. I know you're among the best of your brothers when it comes to shooting skill.”

Embarrassed from being caught, America coughed awkwardly. “Anyways, is your arm healing?”

Philipia didn't respond but stared at her arm. Not long after, she could move it again as if it was never broken in the first place.

America sighed in relief. “Thank goodness.”

They both stood up and America leaned on a tree. He really couldn't see much from the slope but they couldn't hear their pursuits any longer. He sagged in relief. It looked like they wouldn't be caught, for now.

Philipia looks up at the gray sky and felt the cold wind. She stated, “It's gonna rain.”

America nodded. He also looked up when Philipia looked up. Seeing the darkening sky and gray clouds, it was bound to be a big one.

“Let's hurry.”

They wondered through the forest, passing through huge Narra trees. This time, it was America that was leading the way. Philipia stared at his back. It was broad and tall, she thought how safe and warm it must be in his embrace. Philipia looked at herself, wearing a dress that Martial made her wear and couldn't help hugging

herself. She probably doesn't deserve it, she's too dirty.

Meanwhile, America finally realized he called this Philipia ‘Mahal’ earlier. Just now, he was trying to say that he doesn't see the alter and her as the same person yet he shot himself on the foot by calling her that nickname!

Two people with different thoughts walked through the forest of thousand years old Narra trees; the silence between them could be cut with a knife.

But just then, Philipia's phone rang.

“Hello?”

[Philipia! It's me, Spain!]

They both stop and Philipia turned the call into speaker mode.

[Joe! Are you there?!]

America smirked. “Yeah, I'm here. We're good.”

[We're almost there. Me and J are on our way]

“Alright. We'll walk around the forest, see if we can find a place to jump from.”

[Huh?! Jump?! Are you crazy?]

America sighed. “You'll understand when you get here! Anyways, hurry up, we're being chased!”

[Alright, just stay hidden okay?!]

“Got it.”

[Both of you, take care.]

The call ended.

Philipia and America glanced at each other. “I guess we'll have to look for a place to hide,” Just as America said that, the rain came

dropping one by one, plopping down one after another, transitioning into a heavy downpour.

As if the odds were in their favor, the pursuits had to retreat due to low visibility. Both Philipia and America used the rain as a cover and found a cave that was big enough to fit two people and shelter them.

America leaned on the cold stone and shivered. “Damn, I want to complain how cold it is, but if it wasn't for this rain we'd still be getting chased,” he said while trembling and hugging himself.

Philipia wasn't any better. The clothes she wore only had a thin strap that supports everything. Because they were panicking and didn't think too much of her clothing, they escaped in a hurry and forgot to bring even a jacket or a coat. Fortunately, she was naturally a warm-blooded person. Even if it was cold, at least she could endure it.

America turned towards Philipia who was retreating at the very back, as if trying to merge herself with the wall.

“Don't worry. China and J are coming. You still remember J right? Japan?”

Philipia nodded. “I don't have amnesia, it's not like I can't remember who he is.”

America was ashamed. “O-oh... Sorry. I'm still not sure how this alter thing works.”

Philipia pursed her lips and explained. “Me and Filipia, the Philipia you guys knew, were awake at the same time. But most of the time, I was asleep and can only remember a few things. Because we weren't aware of each other, we didn't know we existed at the same time, even so, it was mostly Filipia who was with you guys. I simply hid and slept.”

America still couldn't fully grasp the meaning, but he understood. “I see. You can't remember most of the things, right?”

Philipia nodded.

“It must've been hard.”

It was the first time, someone said something like that. For a moment, Philipia felt touched and couldn't help smiling. “You're nice. But its okay. Filipia suffered more than I did.”

America didn't think so. His mindset was simple. Two people suffered at the same time, but for him, for some reason, it was Philipia who suffered more than the other. “Filipia... right?” He inquired and received a nod of affirmation.

He continued, “Filipia, was protected by her alters—I mean, your alters, right?”

Philipia nodded.

“Filipia had someone in her mind to protect her and there were people willing to protect her, even meeting and bonding with your uncle Jack and brother Greg. She had a lot of people she can depend on. But when you ‘woke’ up—is that the right term? When you woke up, you had no one except you... right?”

It was a slurry and immature comfort but Philipia can feel he was sincere. His words were pure logic and reasonable that you couldn't deny it. “I never thought of that.”

“Wasn't it Filipia who had everyone and who lived most of your life? Isn't it a bit unfair? It's like you were robbed out of your childhood. Of course, she probably didn't know but... You know what I mean.”

Philipia looked at America. There was a sense of realization, an enlightenment. She's not hating Filipia, in fact, she's thankful for her hard work. She shielded her and protected her without knowing it herself. But if one would look at it in a different perspective, isn't it a bit unfair for her? The main host? She never asked this in the first place. The people who cared for Filipia didn't seem to be as intimate as they were, they had a sense of rejection—SHE had a sense of rejection; feeling as if she was standing behind the shadow of her alter.

She thought nobody wanted her, but it wasn't that they didn't want her... They just didn't know how to act around her. A new person...

Ahh... Philipia thought she already understood them and accepted it. But after understanding everything, after thinking about it.

She needed closure.

America watched Philipia's expression change in all sorts of emotions.

When he helped her out earlier, her other eye had been covered and only one, the yellow one, was exposed. Even if he was stupid, he knew what Martial did, and after seeing her hurriedly take something out of a container—an eye, he felt like venting his anger by punching that bastard. But a punch isn't enough.

He snapped from his thoughts when he heard a soft whimper, like an injured puppy left to be abandoned. Shivering from the cold, trembling all over, crying from the pent up feelings, Philipia whimpered and held her tears as much as possible.

America couldn't stop himself and walk over to the female leader and wrap his body around her. She was small, petite, and fragile. She had been hurt, manipulated, played, confused, blamed, betrayed, far too many times she deserves a break.

“Don't cry...” He whispered. Their wet bodies stuck together; damp and uncomfortable but Philipia felt warmth. His shirt was wet from the rain but she didn't want to separate from him.

“Can I hug you back?”

America smiled and rest his chin on her head. “Sure.”

Philipia cautiously wrap her hands around him. She wasn't sure and her actions were quite childish. In a sense, she really is still just a child. Because she was born different, her constitution was different, did she deserve such treatments? Can't she still be born special and live normally? Can't it be?

Perhaps she wasn't given the time to grieve. Memories with South

began to resurface. Each memory were so precious she didn't want anyone to look into them.

“South died...”

“North took his body back home... He must be preparing for his funeral, the whole country was shrouded in gloom, even their airports were closed off.”

Her breathing skipped and finally, she sobbed and cried in his embrace.

Just this once, let her have this warmth, even just a bit.

_____

Have I gone lazy guys? Am I lazy now? My writing didn't seemed to have improved. It's so sad 😔.

Chapter 57 : The land of the free

[We're here, as expected, security is tigh-- ackk! Malaysia! What the heck?!]

[The Gatling gun is broken! Wahhh!!]

[Are you really worrying about some gun right now?!]

Spain sighed as he listened to the conversation. “Focus Indonesia! Focus! Find Joe and Philipia first!”

“I got it! I got it! Don't hang up!”

Spain didn't hang up and let the call run. Of course, this would've been dangerous and they could've been found immediately if Martial used it to track them, but they used a special private signal thanks to Cosmos so they could call with ease. Although it wasn't easy at first, but somehow, they had help from J who retreated from the background.

“Did they find her?” J asked, coming out of the control room.

Spain shook his head. “Not yet...”

“I wonder if they're okay...”

Spain looked at the distance where they could see a small part of the island. His expression was grim and his heart was constantly worrying.

Spain takes out his phone while he handed the other one that has an ongoing call with Indonesia and went inside the control room. Unlocking his phone, he went to his messages and clicked on the unknown number and read the message: [Can you, China, and America do me a favor? Get a boat (even if it's secondhand) and a military helicopter? Might need it for something]

At first, Spain thought it was Philipia. Knowing her, she must've lost another phone and sent him this email through a new one. The reason he didn't even doubt it and immediately thought of Philipia was because his number is known to a few people like J, America, Russia, Philipia and other people who he needed keep in contact with. Even if his number was known by someone, in order to send him a message, they must first go through ten firewalls that needed passwords, that's why it's rare to receive messages from strangers. Of course, there are hackers and really skillful individuals but they usually give up on the fifth firewall that needed a passcode that only he knew, and no matter how hard they try, even if they hire a professional hacker or even a legion of them, they wouldn't be able to get in, and if you did manage to get in, it'll send a warning to his people and they'll deal with them immediately. Fortunately, they aren't dumb and avoid trouble with a leader.

Thus, when he received this message, he immediately moved and called China and America, who was at Canada's country, and followed her instructions. As a result, they avoided the tragedy and the explosion, and what was strange was that the message arrived just an hour before it happened. Therefore Spain began to doubt the message, even more so when he heard from Canada through America about what had occur and what happened to Philipia.

His hand gripped onto the phone case and stared at the messages. From the usage of words and the way they gave instructions; it felt like this person knew them and wasn't unfamiliar in the slightest. Even J, who read it, thought that there was nothing wrong and inquired if Philipia was the one who sent it.

Of course it wasn't her, and later proven when he received a message from Malaysia: [*Malayan sent a photo* Emergency! Emergency! Philipia sent me a message! We have to rescue her!]

He clicked on the photo and saw Philipia's message, with her name as the sender, asking Malaysia and Indonesia to come get her. Spain thought of the helicopter and the boat that they had and immediately called Malaysia.

Spain sat inside the control room, contemplating. Whoever this unknown person was or what their motives are, he was still

thankful. Perhaps, just a hunch, Spain thought this unknown person was on their side.

[I found her! Vietnam! Brunei! I found them! Laos, hurry and use ‘that’!]

J heard Indonesia's voice and called Spain from the control room. “Spain! they found her!”

Spain snapped out of his thoughts and immediately grabbed the helm and began voyaging as fast as they can.

[You guys better prepare the boat! We'll be back in no time!]

“Got it! Don't lose them!” J replied and hanged up.

Back in the forest, Philipia had mostly calmed down. She still wanted to mourn but it wasn't the right time; she can only hold her tears back again.

“Hey, don't worry, whatever happens, I'm here...”

Philipia glanced at him. “I know, America. I'm just worried for you, I mean, what you did back there was pretty reckless but I'm still glad you came to get me.”

America chuckled and pats her head. “It was worth it, although it was kind of messy, I'm not really good at making plans,” He replied.

“How about Spain and Japan? You said they were here to get us?” She wondered how they knew but thought it'd be better to ask this question on another time.

America bobbed his head. “Yep,” He said. “I'm sure we'll both get out alive, those idiots are stubborn anyways.”

Philipia chuckled and felt a wave of relief. “I'm glad...” She said and pulled her knees closer to her chest. “I'm so glad I'm out of that hell... Everyday was hell.”

It was warm. The fire they made was warm. They made sure to hide the light so it won't be a beacon to expose their location while still

keeping themselves warm.

America leaned close to the fire and sighed from the warmth. “Anyways, you don't have to worry about it.”

Just as his words left his mouth, there was a sound of shouting and yelling not far from where they hid.

“Over here!”

Philipia hurriedly put out the fire. The cave was immediately engulfed in darkness; they hid deeper and held their breaths. The cave wasn't even that big and it wasn't like it had a deep crevice. But thanks to the heavy rain and the dark sky, they were veiled perfectly.

Their bodies stuck close. Philipia can hear the incoming footsteps walking through the wet mud with the rustling leaves. They didn't just have to hide from the men, they had to hide from the dogs too. The icy water poured into America's sneakers and into Philipia's shoes as they hid in silence.

Quaking and sweating with fear as Martial's men searched for them. They weren't accurate but, they kept searching around the area around them, they just couldn't find the cave that had a narrow and very hidden entrance. They would have to grope around in the heavy rain with the sound of thunder and lightning over head.

When afraid, when under stress, we speed up our brain's "angry-face search app" but, as we get faster, we get less accurate. We start to see angry faces that aren't there, reading calm faces as angry; the stress hormones don't choose what we fear, they amp up whatever we've learned to fear. That's why society falls apart under ongoing stress—cracking us at our weak-points, spreading hate and indifference like a damn virus.

These were the thoughts inside America's head as he hear the growing sound of someone advancing towards their direction.

Philipia can feel his trembling body, influenced by his nervousness, she couldn't help trembling along. But she quickly shook the feeling

away. This wasn't the time to be nervous, it wasn't the time to be scared.

Philipia calmed her breathing and closed her eyes. She tried to focus her hearing on that one particular sound. The sound of someone walking through the wet mud, their soles sticking and making squishy noise; the wet and damp leaves that rustled like wet sandpaper, and their breathing that rhythmically move.

Philipia tried her best to remember, even if it was just a memory muscle, from Filipia's early training with Martial. From the depths of her memory, a certain scene played.

When that person was about to discover the cave, Philipia made a swift move of locking him, covering his mouth and twist his neck from behind; her moves were unhesitant and smooth, as if she had done it multiple times.

When the body fell, Philipia felt distressed. This was her people, her own countrymen, and they died in her hands.

America didn't even react, and like a tacit understanding, they pulled the body inside making it a bit more crowded. Hurriedly, Philipia healed the man, unwilling to let him die.

“You...” Were the only words America can say when he saw her expression. It was distressing and sorrowful.

America can empathize with the female leader. Killing your own men was like killing a child you protected. For him, her actions were reasonable so he can only grope around the man's body, trying to find anything useful. He felt around his shirt then his pants and found a gps tracker that had a blinking green dot on the screen.

“Their tracking you?”

The man was healed and was fortunate enough not to meet the face of death. Philipia peered over to America who showed her the tracker, looking at it in doubt before realization kicked in. She fumbled around her body and thought she was practically wearing nothing but a dress with spaghetti straps, except...

Philipia held the necklace around her neck. Martial made her wear this necklace after one of their tryst. He said something about his undying love and other disgusting words he whispered to her ear before wrapping the beautiful necklace, that was like a chain, around her neck. It complimented her and accentuated her collarbone. As if the necklace was made just for her.

Philipia pulled the necklace with a snap! She looked at it on her palm and thought how much of a liar Martial is. “Let's go, we can't stay here long.” She said before tossing the item without batting an eye.

“That necklace...”

“It's not a necklace,” She cut him off. “It's a collar. Only dogs wear collars.”

Philipia stood up, scanning the outside. “There's about eight men, possibly more, wondering around. Let's leave before they find this place as well.”

The two leaders soon left the cave. The pungent mud covered their ankles and legs but they didn't care.

When it is foolish to stay, the courage for running away must be summoned for your survival. Bravery is the sweet-spot on a spectrum from cowardice to foolishness. There are times when running away is that sweet-spot when it is the bravest choice. It is all a matter of circumstance, and always trust your instinct.

There is a quality of rain that opens the soul heavenward, it speaks on the skin the same as the hand of a loving protector. Precisely at this moment. A bullet travelled at the speed of light. The hand of the loving protector opened it's arms to danger.

BAM!

“Ahhhh!!!!”

America stumbled and rolled on the mud.

“America! Are you okay?! What's wrong?!” Philipia was running at

the front, when she heard America's distressing shout, she stopped and hurled herself back to him. She stared at his mud covered face, scrunched up in pain.

On his right leg, there was a bullet buried in his calf. The blood seeping as it mixed with the rain and mud. It doesn't take a genius to know it was Martial's bullet. This accurate and precision was something he can do.

Who is she kidding? Even without that necklace, he can tell where she is.

Philipia wrap one of his arms around her and helped America stand, half carrying him. “Stand up! We're almost there!”

America gritted his teeth and tried his best to ignore the tormenting pain.

BAM!

“Ahhh!!! Fuck!”

He was shot once more, this time on the back.

If it was the adrenaline working its way to numb a bit of his pain, it was working. He was a leader and like most leaders, he was used to seeing blood and experiencing pain, but it still hurts damn it!

At first, he panicked, but when another bullet was shot hitting the back of his shoulder, the pain that the adrenaline numbed for him exploded like a bomb. He felt that pulsing agony on the gushing wound; every beat of his heart were like hammers banging on his injury. His exhaustion came like a wave it made his breathing irregular.

Philipia could no longer support America. She felt distressed and weak. Her legs almost gave up their strength. Seeing America getting shot three times from behind, she covered him and begged. “Stop!”

America's body trembled like a string on a guitar. He can feel himself about to spasm but held it back. He gripped onto Philipia's

hand his veins bulged. “Go! leave me!”

Philipia shook her head. Tears streaming down her face covered in dirt. She once again placed one arm over her shoulder and half carried America. She held his cold, trembling hand as they ran, slow and limping. But without even a few steps, America fell on the ground and pushed Philipia away, yelling, “Leave me!”

“No! I'm not leaving you! I'm not...” Her voice choked from her tears, her heart filled with desperation as she tried to hold America's hand, pulling him away, wanting to escape with him.

America didn't know why, but at the moment, a burst of strength filled his body and pushed Philipia down and a rain of bullets came after.

“Haaaa.... haaaaa.... Shit! My leg,” He hissed in pain.

“We have to hurry if we want to escape!”

America groaned. The pain was too unbearable it felt like he was being nailed on the spot. His body was growing heavier and heavier by the second.

Philipia still half carried him when another sound of a bullet pierced the air, burying the fourth bullet on his back. He didn't even get to react when they tripped and fell forward, rolling down to another slope, stopping just by a cliff.

Philipia didn't even bother with her unsteady balance and quickly ran to America as he kept rolling to the edge as he was about to fall.

“No! Wake up! America!”

He didn't respond, America was unconscious.

“Wake up! Wake up!”

Just as they were about to fall, Philipia pulled him by his shirt, pulling and pulling until he was far from the edge.

Philipia made him lay flat on the ground as she lightly slap his cheek. “America... America...” She called his name over and over. “Wake up. we're here, we're here now. Please wake up...”

Suddenly, there was a sharp ringing. Philipia was in a daze for a second, mechanically fumbling through his pocket and found his phone, flashing and vibrating, the sharp sound coming from it.

“Hello?”

[Hello?! Philipia?! Where are you?! Are you with Joe right now?!]

From afar, Philipia could hear the sound of firing bullets.

[Shit! Keep shooting then off!]

Spain must've been in a pinch, Fighting against Martial's men.

[Where are you right now?!]

She couldn't answer. Philipia was in a state of shock that her brain couldn't react properly.

[We're already here with J! We've been caught but don't worry! We're okay!]

From her trembling purple lips, Philipia opened her mouth to respond but jolted when she heard the sound coming from behind her. Her shoulder tensed and her body was taut as every muscles were frozen in fear while her head was screaming alarm bells, telling her to run!

But she can't run, not without America.

“N-no...” She stuttered as she dropped the phone and shielded America's body protectively. “No please... Don't kill them, please.”

Martial looked at his sister who begged him to spare someone's life. If it was just her, he would've been softhearted. But she had to beg for someone's life, she had to beg him, to save a person's life—and the worse thing is, this person was none other than America.

“My patience's running out, Philipia.”

“Don't touch them...”

Martial sighed, pushing a strand of their hair back using the muzzle of the gun. “You're really testing me.”

Philipia didn't know if she was trembling from the cold or from fear. Either way, she was in a bad position.

[Philipia?!]

Hearing no response, Spain grew worried.

Martial heard his voice from the phone, he narrowed his eyes and shoot it.

Philipia remained frozen but the sudden action almost made her into a statue. The phone wasn't even far from her, it was just inches away from her feet.

Spain heard the disconnected tone and looked at it in doubt. ‘What happened?’ He thought.

Japan came back inside the control room, opened a box and reloaded his gun. His movements were swift and unruffled. Japan took a deep breath first before running out the deck again and exchanged bullets with Martial's men, one of them was Mark with Luzon besides him.

Spain gritted his teeth and steered the helm on a different direction, away from the shore. Seeing the boat turning, Japan ran inside. “What are you doing?!”

“We have to go around and look for them! I think something happened!”

Japan didn't inquire further and simply reloaded his gun and prepared for a possible gun fight. He looked at his grazed left shoulder and pressed it, the blood seeping from his fingers.

BAM! BAM!

Suddenly, their boat was attacked by a group of bullets and saw, tailing them, were two speed boat one of each were Mark and Luzon. “Shit...”

“I'll lose them!”

Japan urged. “No! Keep doing what you're doing! I'll take care of them myself.”

Spain's expression turned grim. “Will you be alright?!”

Japan removed the ring of a grenade with his teeth and smirked. “Who do you think I am, Spaniard?”

Spain conceded as he sighed, “Whatever you say so.”

Japan ran out again and stood on the deck. He held the grenade and threw it towards them.

Mark stared at the grenade thrown to his direction, immediately steered the speed boat away, but was still affected by the impact when it exploded. The water made a huge splash, causing a huge disturbance of water and waves.

Luzon glared at Japan. “How dare you! You'll pay for this! You'll pay with your life!”

From before up until now, Luzon never recovered from the war against him. His heart's hatred only grew as the years go by.

No words were spoken after that. Only the sound of rapid firing of their gun can be heard. Seeing this scene and being in on it, Mark's spirit was shaken. It felt as though they were back at that time, they were back to being slaves in the days of torture where he watched his friends and family, his leaders; captured and beaten, played and used.

He thought he had moved on, he thought he had forgiven the trespassers who showed them what it's like to be in hell. He was only fighting back because he was ordered to do so, he was simply following what was instructed.

But he didn't want this, he didn't want to repeat what had happened, he didn't want to lose anyone anymore. The past was over, it was gone, it was the new age and a new beginning. Why must they keep themselves chained in the time that had long passed?

“Luzon! Stop!” He yelled.

Luzon stopped and turned to him in doubt. “Why?! Why are you stopping me?!” There was shock and anger in his voice.

Mark stopped the speed boat and didn't respond. Luzon didn't know what happened, but as his subordinate, he can only obey and turn his speed boat to him, stopping besides him.

“Let them be,” He ordered.

Luzon was unwilling. “Why?! If I kill him my heart would finally be at peace! Spain and Japan are in that boat! If we catch up to them and kill them, the years of our suffering wouldn't be in vain!”

Mark looked at Luzon in the eyes. “And then?”

His question caught Luzon off guard. “What do you mean?”

Mark looked around and saw the boat had also stopped. Japan stood there, watching them, with Spain besides him. Nobody moved and nobody pulled the trigger. If one of them could shoot him or Luzon, it would've been their win—but the two leaders did nothing.

Perhaps they also felt the same.

“Once you kill them, then what? Will it change the past? Will it remove the scars on our body? Will it bring the people we hold dear back to life?”

This time, Luzon was quiet. There was only the sound of the sea and the rain.

“War is inevitable. The past can never be overwritten. It happened to you, to them, to everyone. Some countries were lucky enough to be away from the war and the bloodshed, even so, they were still

miserable. You can kill them this time, today, tomorrow, or someday in the future. But it can never change what had happened."

Mark turned to Luzon who formed his hand into a fist. "You may feel at peace, but you're still miserable, I'm still miserable, our leader is still miserable. If you truly want to feel peace," he paused to take a deep breath, continuing, "Let go and move on. It's hard—I know, but you're not alone."

Seeing as he won't be saying anything nor do anything, Mark sighed and drove his speed boat towards the leaders. He stopped by the stern at the back of their boat and waited.

Japan was the one who got down from the deck, unarmed. From this position, Mark could easily kill him. But if he did, thinking of Philipia, she wouldn't be able to leave and continue to suffer. Thus, he held back the urge and suppressed the killing intent.

He takes out the same gps tracker America and Philipia found with a blinking dot at the screen. "You'll be able to find her with this..."

Japan stared at the item before taking it. "Thank you."

Japan looked at Mark and his face appeared in his memories. He remembered he watched at the side while his men tortured and beat this person. He was there when he laughed and mocked them, stepping on their heads, kicking them down, tossing them around like a toy, using them as entertainment, savoring their expression of fear and pain as he made them watch the fiasco of him killing their brethren and family.

But at this moment, the same man stood before him who had the upper hand and can kill him effortlessly. Yet this man simply gave him the gps tracker and spoke with a voice that was calm and steady, as if his sins were never worth remembering.

Instead of being grateful, Japan felt guilty. If he could go back in time, he'd like to kneel and beg for forgiveness.

Just as Mark stirred his speed boat away, Japan called, "Hey..."

Mark paused and looked at him. His eyes constricted when he saw the proud sons who conquered and stepped on their land bow with their heads and necks exposed. His heart throbbed, his eyes watered —not from the rain—but from the tears that was as salty as the sea.

“I'm sorry... Thank you, again.”

Mark opened his mouth, closed them, then opened it again. He heard his voice shaking, choking out the words, “Please take care of our Miss. She needs people who she can trust.”

Once again, he's putting all his trust onto them. Japan felt even more guilty. Guilty beyond compare.

Japan bit his lower lip. While still bowing, he replied, “Yes. I promise.”

“Good luck, country leaders. May the heaven guide you.”

Mark finally left and stopped at Luzon's side who remained quiet. His eyes looked lost and confuse. Mark held his shoulders and patted it, “Your wife is still waiting for you. You don't want her to be widowed immediately, right?”

With that said, Luzon finally nodded and followed Mark after one last glance at the boat.

“I hate you...” He said to Mark but Mark simply chuckled.

“You said the same thing back then.”

Luzon sniffled and wiped his tears with his wet sleeve.

Japan breathed out a shuddered breath. “They are good people. It's hard to imagine they're Martial's men.”

Spain nodded before running back to the control room and started the boat once again. When Mark came over, he had the urge to talk and apologize. He wanted to apologize for what happened, but he was afraid of opening up old wounds so he simply stayed behind and let Japan go instead. There were so many regrets and mistakes that he made, so many debts yet to be paid but... They didn't seem

to care anymore. At least one of them didn't.

Japan went inside and placed the gps tracker in front. “There, they're here. Hurry!”

Back at the cliff. Martial gazed at Philipia. “H-how did you know...” She couldn't find the right words to say when her hand unconsciously fumbled on her neck and collarbone.

Martial smiled. “You think I'd put something like that in an obvious place?” He said, “That necklace was just a necklace. There was nothing special about it. That, however, is not.”

Martial points to the hair clip. It was when she recalled Martial fixing her hair, putting on the hair clip for her before she went to the palanquin to rest. Grabbing the accessory, her hair fell to her shoulder and face in the absence of support.

“Then you can have it back.” She said, throwing the item towards him. It broke into three parts and a chip was exposed inside.

Martial didn't even spare it a glance. “It doesn't matter. I'm already here.” He said and offered a hand. “Come now, let's not be stubborn or else you'll suffer the consequences of your actions.”

Philipia didn't budge. She remained in that protective posture. “No...”

Hearing her answer, Martial's temper flared that can cause goosebumps. “What else do you want, Philipia!? I'm already here! The war is already happening there is nothing you can do! I'm the only person who can love you! I'm the only person who'll accept you! I'm the only person who'll be there with you! I was that person who stayed by your side! Protected you! Guided you! trained you! I gave you everything that I had! And all I ever wanted was you! Your love was all I ever wanted! Is that too much to ask?!”

His roaring voice almost overwhelmed the pouring rain. Thunders and lightning joined in his ranting as if they were affected by his anger. The hairs on Philipia's skin stood up to no ends, her teeth were clattering as a response to the cold and fear; her body

trembled, her back soaked in sweat and rain.

Martial stopped and laughed, almost like a madman. He brush his wet hair back, exposing his forehead and face as his eyes glowed while pulsing, rhythmically beating with his heartbeat: erratic and fast.

“Ahhh... What am I even saying?” He asked himself as he looked at Philipia lovingly. “You'll never choose me, no one will. In the end, I have been moving on my own, just me and myself. Forgotten, left, unwanted, forsaken...”

Martial intently looked at America being protected. Slowly, he covered his face with his hands but his eyes were seen by the gap of his fingers; round and wide, his pupils dilating into a dot. “I never once felt that,” his shoulders slackened, his face darkening while his eyes glowed brighter and brighter, like a fire that was growing and growing. “I never once felt being protected by you, Philipia. I never once felt being held in your embrace as you put your life on the line for me. When will it happen? When will you look at me and turn my way? One action and you're already messing with my head, never letting me sleep, never letting me think... Everyday—every single day!”

He laughed and laughed and laughed. His laughter was chaotic and crazy as if the last string of his sanity finally snapped.

“If I can't have you, no one will!!”

BAM!

Smoke came out of the muzzle of his gun. It pointed at the female leader.

A few seconds passed, blood stained Philipia's white dress. It seeped and spread outward. Philipia convulsed in shock as she stared at her stomach. She can feel that throbbing sensation, every edge and surface of that bullet can be felt from her insides; she tasted the salty and metallic flavor, it reminded her of that one time she ate melted butter. Weirdly enough, her body seemed to have malfunctioned, it didn't heal as it did when she broke her arm.

THUD!

She swayed and fell to the ground. The feeling of her blood gushing out was so clear it scared her, like a faucet that had no knob. She looked at the dark gray sky and didn't even realize it was nighttime. Had they been running for that long? Philipia's eyes blinked rapidly as the rain kept plopping on her face, her mouth refused to close as her body begged for air, gasping and choking with every breath she takes.

Martial walked over and he looked at her condescendingly, staring at her face and smiling. At this point, Philipia couldn't think straight; there was this ringing in her ears she thought was annoying and irritating.

“Poor Philipia. Unwanted, forgotten, left, and forsaken... I guessed we're not so different after all.”

He pointed the gun at the female leader while Philipia looked at him dazed.

Two pairs of heterochromia eyes stared at each other.

BAM!

Plop... Plop...

Blood dripped on Philipia's face. The muzzle on Martial's gun was covered by a hand. The knuckles were well defined, the nails neatly trimmed but with dirt in it; the palm was filled with blisters from years of hard work and physical training, yet these hands protected, cherished, and caress; it can brush along the strands of someone's hair with love and adoration; they were hands that spoke with power and kindness; it spoke the kind of precision that only the love and focus of years may bring; they were the hands that knew how to hold you and protect you while simultaneously setting you free.

“I want her...” A raspy voice answered.

Philipia looked at America on top of her as he used his hand to cover Martial's gun. His hair brush along her cheeks and nose whilst

his forehead pressed against hers.

“If nobody wants her, I do. She is my lover after all.” Crystal blue eyes that looked like the sky, that looked like the sea, that looked like it was twinkling like the stars, that looked like you were the only person in the world worth looking at. America smiled, it was breathtaking, Philipia felt like her heart stopped beating.

“You—!”

America gave Philipia a quick kiss on the cheek before tackling Martial to the ground. He kicked and tossed the gun away and force him down, punching him with no technique or style. He was simply dropping his fist randomly. Tired, exhausted, but still powerful.

They had a scuffle like rowdy boys fighting behind the school. They swing their first, kicked with their feet, gritted their teeth, pushing the other here and there; it was a chaotic and confusing fight.

They didn't use anything aside from their strengths and fist. Sweat and blood splattered but nobody gave in. In a rare moment of stupidity, Martial forgot to use his skills, if he could, he would've been able to beat America into a pulp without using any effort at all. Unfortunately, his mind was a mess, filled with jealousy and resentment. The long years of hostility and animosity seemed to have been released at this moment.

Philipia finally sat up and saw the fight. Her vision was still blurry and her body swayed left and right as she struggled to stay awake.

America was pushed to the ground and without even a second after falling, he was met with a series of punches.

“Who do you think you are?! You think you can look down on me?! Do you think I was the same man I once was!? Someone you can kick and toss around?! No! I am Armageddon's descendant! I am Kati's and Perla's son! I am Philipia's Brother! I am Martial Law!”

Every word he spoke, his fist fell as if to drop a stamp. Seeing America all black and blue, Martial stopped and gasped as he stood up and turn towards Philipia who managed to crawl to where his

gun was at.

He laughed, making his way over in just a few stumbling steps, he stepped on her hand reaching for the Roscoe before he picks it up.

“Too bad for you, Philipia.” He chortled while reloading the barrel. “Your prince charming is nothing.”

“Philipia!!”

There came someone's shout. Martial gazed into the sea, down by the cliff, a boat swayed among the wave and rain.

“What was Mark even doing?” He had just asked this when America stood up, once again, and gave him an arm lock from behind.

“You fucking cockroach?!” Martial exclaimed. Struggling as his hand was put behind.

America pulled him back, keeping a safe distance from Philipia. “Go! Go and jump!”

“Philipia if you leave, many people will die! I'll kill everyone!”

America punched him again and pushed him away before running towards the half-concious female leader.

“Go!!!”

Martial was pushed and stumbled but quickly found his balance and aimed the gun.

“You're not getting away—!”

There was no time, America had to act fast. He helped Philipia to her feet and pushed her off the cliff. Just as he did that, he was met with another bullet—the fifth bullet.

Like a slow motion in a movie. Philipia saw the blood splattering in the air, like rubies glistening, dark, and crimson. She reached out her hand and as the tip of her fingers touch his shirt, America was pulled from the back of his collar by Martial, leaving her to fall by

herself, running away by herself.

“America!”

SPLASH!

It was just a few seconds before Philipia plummeted and plunging into the cold water.

Spain didn't even get to react when Japan did not hesitate to jump into the water. Diving into the cold sea; he swam towards Philipia who had already lost consciousness and saw blood was floating upwards originating from her stomach. Scarlet red flowed from the wound in a steady manner.

Japan scooped Philipia into his arms and swam to the surface back to the boat and met with Spain as he helped him carry Philipia out of the water.

Spain laid her flat on the floor and began chest compression. Japan climbed on to the boat, ran to the cockpit and grabbed the first aid kit.

“Philipia, come on, come on. Wake up...” Spain muttered.

It took about 12 compressions for Philipia to wake up, throwing up a lot of water, “Oh! Thank God.”

“She's still bleeding! Hurry and put pressure on her wound!” Japan exclaimed and Spain quickly placed his hand on her stomach, earning a painful groan from the female leader.

While Japan takes out bandages and other things to treat her wound, Spain looked over at the edge of the cliff and saw Martial watching them from afar. His eyes were like an eagle—sharp and intimidating, as if he was watching a bunch of clowns make a fool of themselves. Spain wanted to look away but finally realized America was still in his hands. Spain looked at his friend being held by the collar while unconscious, his body riddled with blood and dirt.

“Joe is still up there.”

Japan wrap the bandage around Philipia's stomach, saying, “You look after Philipia, I'll go back and get Joe.”

“Are you crazy?!”

Just as Japan was about to reply, there came the sound of a helicopter. They both look up and saw a vehicle covered in fire and smoke.

They saw Malaysia, Indonesia, and Laos holding for dear life as it struggled to keep itself in the air.

“Shit!” Spain cursed, watching the helicopter fly overhead and far away, leaving traces of smoke. They must've not seen them or even realize they were down here.

“Vietnam and Brunei are flying that thing, they'll be fine.” Japan reasurred, he had more trust and he knew they know what they were doing. He stood up and turned towards Martial's direction, intending to rescue America.

“J! Don't be impulsive!”

All of a sudden, there was a loud explosion. They even saw a few gigantic trees flying. Martial steadied himself and heard Mark yelling as he instructed his men here and there.

“Tsk... Bothersome.” He glanced at the boat and the three leaders in it, his eyes staying longer on Philipia, before walking away while dragging America's body.

“He's getting away!”

“Don't...”

Philipia stared at Japan. “Don't...” she repeated. After struggling to keep her eyes open she lost consciousness once more.

“Philipia had said it. Let's go...”

Japan unwillingly looked back at the cliff. If only they were a few minutes faster, they could've rescued both America and Philipia.

Japan gritted his teeth before finally conceding.

Spain carried Philipia inside and had Japan guard her as he stirred the boat towards the direction where the helicopter went.

_____

Have you guys ever been shot? Just a random question that popped in my head. ¯_(ツ)_/¯

Also, I'm sorry if these chapters are getting shorter and shorter, unlike before where I could write about 15k and more.

(How the hell did I even manage to write those? (˘･_･˘)

Chapter 58 : The lovers

Spain stirred the helm of the boat, looking into the endless ocean that's stretched out as far as the eye can see.

Japan changed his clothes and went to Philipia's side where she was placed on the floor with some bedding and sheets that they found from the hull. He kneeled besides her and bent his finger to caress her cheek.

“She must've been so exhausted.”

Spain replied while scanning the sea. “Can you call Egypt and Nepal? Use my phone.” He takes out his phone and toss it towards Japan who caught it with one hand.

Japan began to dial their number (he memorized them), and sat next to Philipia while playing with a strand of her hair.

Spain was keeping an eye out when he noticed something from the distance. There was a tall tower of smoke emanating from a broken helicopter that was half sunken, with five leaders were on top.

Spain increased the speed and finally saw his companions, safe.

Japan had just finished the call with Egypt and gave back Spain his phone.

“Found them.” Spain said.

Japan got out of the control room and leaned on the deck railings, watching the five leaders waiting like children for their parents. The boat stopped in front of them and he chuckled, “Are you supposed to be mermaids or beluga whales?”

Malaysia, hugging a broken Gatling gun, rolled his eyes. “Ha, ha, ha. Funny Japan! Funny! Hurry up and drop the anchor and get us out of here!”

Indonesia stood up and held on to the stern of the back of the boat. “Get in.”

Malaysia jumped inside first and plopped down on the deck. Following that were Vietnam, Laos, Brunei, and Indonesia who were in the same condition.

Laos regulated his breath for a moment before asking, “Where's Philipia?”

Hearing her name, the rest of them looked at Japan. “You got her out?” Vietnam excitedly inquired, his eyes twinkling in joy.

Japan nodded. “We did, she's inside the control room, asleep. Careful not to wake her up.”

Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia ran inside the control room the moment Spain went out. He walked over to the three. “What now?”

“What do you mean, what now?” Brunei asked.

Japan sighed and answered, “Joe was left behind.”

Brunei and Laos were shocked.

“America? Why?!” Brunei exclaimed, his crossed arms dropping to his side.

Spain began to recount what they went through and what had happened. Philipia's fall, America being caught by Martial, Martial dragging America back, Philipia stopping Japan from going...

While Spain was retelling the events, Brunei and Laos' expression were solemn—even Japan, who already knew what had happened, wore the same dark expression.

“Philipia must have a plan...” Laos gauged.

Brunei leaned on the railings and watched the helicopter they were just on slowly sink to the bottom of the sea.

Japan glanced at it and couldn't help wondering, “What happened

to you guys?”

Brunei peered at him, responding through gritted teeth, “Who else if not Russia and Atlantis?”

Japan was startled. “Russia? Why is Russia there?” unknowingly, he ignored Atlantis' name. He wasn't even close nor did he even meet the man personally.

Just thinking about his face and what they saw made Brunei grit his teeth. He irritatingly ruffled his hair as he said, “What else?”

Japan and Spain glanced at each other.

“The one that Ireland and Scotland speculated...” Japan uttered.

“Was Russia?” Spain continued.

There was a dreadful sensation amidst the group for an unusual amount of time. Inside the control room, they could hear conversations between Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. They were additionally able to perceive the water close by and the breeze blowing through.

“Anyways, it doesn't matter.” Brunei spoke.

“Of course it matters, it's Russia,” Spain stated.

“And you're Spain.” Brunei responded. “You're Spain and he's Japan. Even if he's a powerful leader, he's still alone—Atlantis on the other hand is nothing, he probably joined because his father told him so.”

Laos helplessly sighed. “Isn't that too harsh?”

“Is it? That man has been getting on my nerves for a while now. If not for the fact that he's Tethys' cousin, I would've…” Just as he mentioned Tethys, he paused, and his expression morphed into trepidation. “Where is Tethys?”

Japan patted his shoulder and reawakened them. “You don't have to worry. He's fine. He has to stay low for now and needs time to

prepare.”

Hearing Japan's explanation, their expression immediately gets washed with relief.

Good. They still have hope.

“Anyways, we still have to wait for Philipia to wake up, but we can't just let her rest in a boat. Do you know a place where we can stay? Martial saw all of our faces; it won't be good to let her stay in one of ours.” Spain rationalized.

Behind them, Malaysia tiptoed on Spain's back shoulder while still hugging a Gatling gun. “I know someone who we can ask for help～”

Philipia's dream brought her back to that forest. It was raining and wet, and the leaves stuck close together like wet glue. The air was heavy and humid; it was hard to breathe.

Philipia took a step forward as though her legs had a mind of their own, and it took her to a place. The mud covered her bare feet, dirty and sticky, pungent and gross.

On a cliff, she saw a man. The man's back was facing her. His clothes were unstained and clean, contrasting with the dirty surroundings. In front of the man was the sea; its raging waves clashed together, and from the distance, she could see white bolts of lightning.

She extended her hand, intending to reach out to the man. But the ground beneath her feet slowly ate her feet; the ground turned soft, like quicksand, slowly consuming her and pulling her down, preventing her from reaching the man.

Philipia tried to scream or yell at the man to look back, but the man did not. His white shirt continued to dance with the gale; his back still facing her. Just as her face was about to sink as well, the man finally moved.

Dazzling color of cobalt were the windows to his soul. A pleasing

air, a gentle expression, and a loving gaze. It was the type of face you'd stop to take a look, the type of face you'd loosen up and trust upon first meeting, the type of face you don't mind spending late nights with.

“America...”

“Ameri...ca”

A palm was placed on Philipia's brow to measure her temperature; it moved and proceeded to a tiny basin near the nightstand. A clean handkerchief was soaked and twisted to remove excess water before being folded neatly into a rectangle and placed on her forehead.

“Shhh... it's just a dream.”

Philipia's eyelids twitched a few times, as if struggling to wake up.

“A bad dream. It is only a bad dream.”

Philipia eventually awoke when the sun revealed its beauty, bringing warmth and brilliance and displaying the earth dwellers its beautiful sky. She was initially perplexed, not knowing where she was, what had happened, or when she had lost consciousness.

These three questions popped up in her head like a notification after connecting to the internet.

“Awake?” There came a voice, It was the kind of deep voice that is so very easy to fall in love with, that auditory caramel.

Her gaze was drawn to the edge of the bed. She couldn't tell who it was because the sun was behind them, casting a dark silhouette.

“Take your time. You've been asleep for two days.”

Two days? She had been asleep for two days?

“America...” As she strained to sit up, Philipia mumbled. She had no idea how parched and dry her throat was.

The man stood up and helped her. “Be careful; you might open your

wound; you just had stitches.”

Stitches?

Philipia lowered her gaze to her stomach. She was clad in a navy blue gown, yet she can feel bandages wrapped around her with a mild tingling pain as if her insides were being pulled out.

“Your wound didn't heal. The bullet Martial used was special... I'll explain more later, for now, just sit tight and don't move too much. Do you want water? Here.”

He held a white cup with a straw and helped Philipia drink. “Steady, don't drink too fast...”

He gently guided Philipia, who unconsciously relaxed as a result. Philipia drank about half the water and then sighed before leaning back.

While grinning, he couldn't help but touch a hair behind her ear. It has indeed been a while.

Philipia raised her head, allowing her eyes to adjust to the brightness.

The man laughed when he noticed her straining her eyes. “Unable to see me?" He enquired before approaching the window and drawing the curtains over it.

Philipia at last caught sight of the man's face, without any light or shade to obscure it.

Philipia was able to recall the name and face of this individual from Filipia's foggy memories. But instead of the bright and exuberant appearance he had previously, he now exuded maturity, as if the butterfly had finally emerged from its cocoon.

“Norway...?”

Norway giggled his eyes sparkling with happiness. “I am here.”

“Why...”

Norway takes a seat. "Before I left from the academy. I informed Indonesia and Malaysia to get in touch with me if they ever needed my assistance. They seemed like the most trustworthy option, in my opinion. I apologize for concealing this from you."

Philipia shook her head. "I was just curious."

When Norway heard her casual response, he was a little bit disappointed. "Rest for a while."

"I've had enough sleep."

Norway chortled. "All right, I'll call for Egypt and Nepal. Is it okay if you stay here?"

"Yeah. Thank you."

Philipia was left alone in the room after Norway left. The decor of the space was contemporary and serene, with a predominant color scheme of green or any other light shade that didn't seem overpowering. She didn't experience the tight, uneasy feeling she had when she was at home; instead, she felt relieved.

The agony in her stomach made Philipia wince as she rose from the bed. Remembering Norway's statement, she reasoned that her brother must have created a new lethal weapon, possibly with her in mind. It's enough to know that "Your wound didn't heal," Philipia can infer that Martial's bullet was unique from his usage of it.

Through the side view of the full-body mirror, Philipia noticed her pale and frail appearance as she limped there. For the first time, Philipia experienced a sense of realism and expressed "This is how I should have looked."

Maybe it took a while for her body to adjust; but perhaps it was just in her head, when she looked into the mirror, she felt more like herself.

Philipia was wearing a two-piece dress that she could easily access her wound by lifting just the shirt. She undid the garment to reveal her heavily bandaged stomach, through which blood had already poured. Philipia fixed her gaze on it intently, as though in awe of

the scene where a female leader was unable to heal herself. When she couldn't do it, it would immediately heal on its own without her intervention. This time, though, it has been two days and her injury still doesn't appear to be getting better; it may even be infected.

“Philipia! Why did you get up?” Egypt entered and hastily made his way over to Philipia. “Didn't the mongrel Norway tell you not to move around?!” He chided.

As he entered the room with Nepal, who was dragging a small trolley filled with supplies and equipment for medicine, Norway felt wronged, saying, "I didn't...".

“Sorry. After two days of sleep, I was curious how I looked like.”

Helpless, Egypt sighed. "What are you thinking? As a peony, you retain your exquisite beauty!”

Philipia found it funny. “A Peony? Not a sampaguita? Why?”

"I'm not sure, but I doubt you like sampaguita—do you like sampaguita?”

Silent was Philipia. She fixed her gaze on Egypt as she responded with an argument as she tried to process it. "I'm not sure. Neither, I suppose.”

“A sampaguita or a peony, it doesn't matter," said Nepal. He gets rid of the blankets, pillows, and sheet and sets them to the side. “Can you call someone to change these, Norway?”

It took hardly any time at all for several servants to enter, swapping out the bedding, and remove the used linens.

Nepal: “……” Oh.

Philipia was once more made to sit down after the bedding were changed. Philipia automatically relaxed as she inhaled the clean, natural sun aroma of the linens, followed Egypt's instructions, and responded to his queries.

“Any pain aside from the stomach?”

“No.”

“Here?”

“No.”

“Here...?”

“There's nothing.”

“Then this?”

“Ow!”

Egypt clicked his tongue. “Just what I thought.”

Philipia pouted while rubbing her left arm. “But you pinched me, of course it'll hurt.”

Egypt sighed, "Philipia. Stop pretending to be fine when you're not, please. There is no shame in acknowledging your suffering.”

Norway, at the side, remarked, “Suffering is a strong word.”

Philipia was touched, but she honestly believed there was nothing other than the stomach. “I understand. Thank you, Egypt. But there is no pain except this one,” she said, pointing to the incision being sewn by Egypt.

“Alright. If you say so, but please—consider it me begging you—do not remain mute when it hurts. It hurts for a reason, and that reason is to have it treated.”

Egypt was in charge of advising, questioning, and scolding, while Philipia was in charge of listening, obeying, and... Listening. It felt like she was being chastised by an enraged Doctor who was fed up with unwilling patients who refused to listen. It's best not to irritate your doctor when your life is in his hands.

Norway looked on from the side, his eyes softening. Although Nepal was generally silent and his role was to hand the tools to Egypt, he wasn't left out. Even if he didn't say anything, he was automatically

a part of this circle where only the three of them could stand while he felt like the outsider who didn't have the guts to break such a serene group. His gaze was drawn quietly to Philipia, who appeared to be more relaxed and at ease than when she was alone with him.

He would occasionally regret leaving the academy and missing out on so many possibilities to enjoy and interact with other individuals of his status. He felt left out, as if he couldn't reach out to them anymore. He was walking backwards while others were moving forward.

For a moment, it was awkward being in here.

“I still have things to do,” he remarked, carelessly smiling.

Philipia nodded and turned to face him. “Thank you, Norway.”

Norway grinned. “No worries. If you require assistance, there is a switch on the nightstand that will summon a servant promptly.”

Norway stepped out of the room, closing the door behind him.

When she saw him leave, Philipia sighed and gravely turned to Egypt and Nepal. “I have a request...”

Egypt had just cut the thread and handed Nepal his gloves. He stared at her with curiosity, asking, “What is it?”

Philipia pursed her lips, inhaled deeply, and whispered...

China, Spain, and Japan were present in the living room. Laos, Vietnam, Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia still had work to do and were forced to return to their own countries with the assistance of Norway. Of course, with Martial's rise and sudden insurrection, they needed to prepare, defend, and be present in case something went wrong.

China had attempted to locate all of the explosives Martial claimed to have planted with the support of Cosmos and Canada, but some leaders were uncooperative and refused to allow them to investigate their country. What more argument do they need than 'There's a possible bomb in your country, and millions of people will die'?!

When he felt a headache coming on, China massage his temple.

“I had my country conduct a thorough search, including all of our islands and beaches. But it's taking longer than I anticipated, and the personnel and budget to complete it are already stretching,” Spain said as he circled all of his country's islands on his tablet. “I had Madrid search every nook and cranny, even unintentionally discovering illegal businesses like human trafficking and drug dens. My country seemed to be plagued with parasites.”

Japan, who was signing some paperwork while working on his laptop, responded, “It's not surprising, everyone's country has a parasite of their own.”

China entered the kitchen and noticed Greg staring at the boiling pot while wearing an apron. His gaze was formal, as if he wasn't staring at a pot but at an officer who had made a rookie mistake.

“What are you up to?” He inquired as he brewed himself a tea to soothe his stress.

“Lugaw,” Greg answered. “For Pearl.”

China poured hot water into the cup. “Shouldn't you stop referring to her as Pearl? You know she's not the Philipia you grew up with.”

Greg removed the lid and the fragrance of porridge floating through the air with the heat kissed his face. “For me. Even if she wasn't the Pearl I know, she's still my sister.”

China took a little sip after stirring the cup. His body was visibly relaxing. “Philipia doesn't think so,” he said, despite his relaxed and courteous demeanor. “For her, you are a stranger, a Tethyrian.”

“Are you done?!” Greg snarled, turning the stove off. “If not, leave.”

“This isn't your house.”

“I don't care, if I said leave, leave! Fucking asshole.”

China disregarded his crude remarks and returned to the living room with a tray of tea for himself.

Italy and Iceland finally arrived.

“How is everything going?” Italy asks as he remove his coat. “I left my country to Venice and had him assist me in covering it for a while, not even a glimpse of the fucking bomb.”

Iceland hung his own coat and proceeded to the second floor.

Japan instantly stopped working and rose up, pointing in the direction of Iceland, exclaiming, “Philipia is still resting!”

Iceland paused in the middle of the steps and responded, "And? Do you think I didn't know?”

Japan narrowed his eyes as he approached the foot of the steps. “She is still sleeping... Leave her alone.”

Iceland slowly turned around. He gave Japan a disdainful glance. “Why are you even trying to stop me?”

Spain got up and advised, "Enough! Stop, both of you."

Japan was tenacious. Ignoring Spain's warning, he stepped forward. “Egypt and Nepal are present. You aren't asked to enter.”

Iceland remained silent for a moment before rolling his eyes and adhering to it. He was only conceding since he was Kyoto's sibling and Philipia did need some alone time.

“For the time being, no one is allowed to visit her... Except, of course, Egypt and Nepal,” Spain exhaled in relief, seeing the fight that was just boiling over come to an end.

“And Norway,” Greg added. As he walked out of the kitchen, he folded his apron clumsily. “You cretins had better behave and do your part; this isn't just about her; it's about you, your country, and your people. So it's time to quit acting like puberty-affected high school lads and start acting like mature grownups! For fuck's sake, you're leaders!”

Everyone fell silent. Then, from the second level, there was a door closing and two sets of footsteps.

“Mongrels be Mongrels among their Mongrel friends.” Egypt came down, looking at each leaders face with a judgemental look. “Philipia is awake, and she needs food; something light and not heavy like a—”

Greg dashed back into the kitchen. He poured the porridge into a bowl and set it in a tray before carrying it up the stairs.

Egypt nodded in approval. “Perfect, just the one!”

“One person at a time.” Nepal reminded before walking down.

Iceland felt compelled to follow Greg as he walked up the stairs. But he turned to face Japan, who was staring back at him with a glare that suggested someone was watching him (and not in a good way). What is his issue?!

Greg became tense all of a sudden. It was as if he were meeting a stranger for the first time, as if it were their first official meeting. For weeks and months, he had been gnawed by remorse and pain, which had made him depressed and gloomy. He was barely aware of his girlfriend and had not noticed when she broke up with him via text.

With a racing heart, Greg stood in front of the door. He was even more terrified than when he faced their Father for a beating. Greg grasped the tray, drew a long breath, cleared his throat, and knocked quietly three times on the door.

“Come in.”

A voice responded. It was comfortable and warm. It was certainly the same voice he recognized, yet a distinction was amiss. It had more elegance and seemed to vibrate and tease someone's eardrums.

Greg took a second deep breath and exhaled forcefully before stepping foot inside.

Nepal had opened the windows for air; the drapes were tied to each side, letting the breeze for entry and help her relax. Some birds were even courageous enough to eat breadcrumbs while perched on

the ledge.

Philipia was watching the birds eat as if she were looking at someone do a trick. Her eyes were fixed and focused, and she had a sweet smile on her lips. She didn't check who came in and assumed it was either Egypt, Nepal, or Norway—he did mention about coming back after his work. Philipia looked around after smelling the familiar and unusual smell of porridge, which brought back memories of her childhood, and noticed Greg standing in the middle of the room with a worried and apprehensive expression.

Philipia was taken aback at first, but her mood remained stable. “Is that lugaw?”

Greg replied with a nervous smile and rubbing the back of his neck. “Yeah. Lugaw is good and it's a light meal.”

Philipia's eyes appeared to be fixed on something in the distance. “I remember mama cooking it... She didn't know how and ended up burning the whole thing, but Papa's lugaw was the best. It was the best lugaw I ever tasted.”

Philipia didn't mind mentioning anything from a long time ago because she had experienced it herself. It wasn't any of her alters or Filipia's. It was all hers and hers alone. Surprisingly, if she concentrates over it, she can recall it as if it were yesterday.

“I remember you being hit by Mama after you laughed at her lugaw. I remember brother Martial mocking you for it. Then I remember Papa, asking me to help him recook the lugaw.”

Greg's tense shoulder loosened as he placed the tray on the table. “I remember... Mama beating my ass really hard, it still gives me goosebumps thinking about it.”

Philipia nodded, not realizing Greg had already approached. He knelt alongside the bed and locked his gaze on her. “You may think it was someone else who spent my time with, but for me. My sister is still my sister. Even if your soul or your brain changed, your still my sister... Your heart, for me, is still the same.”

It was like Philipia was looking at Greg for the first time. There were dark circles under his eyes, his skin looked a little dry, his lips were chapped, he had stubbles on his chin and jaw, unkempt hair that appeared like it hadn't been washed in a while, and bloodshot eyes from lack of sleep. She lifted her hand and gently combed his hair with her fingers.

Philipia fixed her gaze on Greg. From this vantage point, he can see her eyes going up and down, scanning him and scrutinizing his entire face as if she were reading a book.

I notice a distinction. He pondered.

Greg isn't sure if they noticed or if she did. However, the other Philipia avoids making eye contact. She can stare at you for a moment, but not for long, as if she's terrified of being perceived through—it must've been a form of defense she wasn't even aware of. But not this Philipia. Even though she dismisses it, saying she can't for the reason she's ‘autistic’, Philipia makes eye contact with individuals she trusts, and she'll look at you in the eyes, right into your heart, directly to your soul.

Perhaps the autistic part of herself was not hers, but that of someone else. The fearful and timid part of her was never hers to begin with. Greg conducted as much research relating to DID as he could, even consulting a doctor and meeting someone who had the same disorder. They differ but are comparable to one another. Some conditions were not the same, while others were more distinct.

Philipia allegedly belonged to the former, but as a leader and someone with a long lifespan, it increased and her alters even split themselves, expanding the people inside her head as the years went by. But Filipia and Philipia lived at the same time, and Filipia, as an alter who is purportedly her disguise, had to take on or acquire some characteristics.

Greg can only conclude this after accumulating so much information.

“Brother, you're thinner.” Philipia said with a normal tone, as if she was only inquiring about the weather.

Greg snapped out of his reverie and responded with a laugh. “Yeah, I haven't been eating very much.”

Philipia took a look at the porridge, which was still steaming, indicating that it had just been made or reheated. “Eat with me,” she suggested as she pushed herself out of bed, gripping her stomach involuntarily.

Greg was overjoyed and instantly stood up, carrying her in typical princess form, “This is faster,” he said with a grin.

Philipia was carried and placed as gently as possible on a chair. “Uhm... Brother.”

Greg was about to leave the room to get his own bowl. “Yeah? Need me to get you something?”

Philipia stared at the porridge, uncertain. “How is... Joe?”

Greg blinked and considered the information they had received. He didn't know what Mark ate, but he provided information about America to Japan and Spain.

“He's being held in an old cell. Don't worry. We've been told he's being fed...”

“Just fed? Joe has wounds. He was shot multiple times.”

Greg was also helpless. “We were just told he's being fed, at least he's still alive.”

“Where did you get this information?” Philipia pondered. Did they plant a spy early on in order to gain inside knowledge while remaining under Martial's radar?

Greg replied, “It was Mark. He's on our side...”

Philipia wasn't the least bit happy. her eyes dimmed as already mourning an old friend. “Pity...”

“Pity?”

Greg was still curious, but Philipia continued, her expression changing within the following moment. “I want to eat in the dining room. While I'm there, I want to discuss something with everyone.”

America cried out in pain. He was still on the cliff with Philipia when he passed out, but before he blackened, he pushed her off and let her escape.

Luckily she did... That was all that mattered to America.

As the man behind him lashed him, scratching his back and opening his wounds, he heaved and drew big breaths. They'll occasionally heal it and then execute another round of whipping. It was a never-ending loop of torment.

America almost passed out from the pain, but the man behind him wouldn't allow him. He was cured before losing consciousness, and the agony that had been bothering him vanished—if only he could repair the gunshot wounds on his back and leg.

Martial walked and stood in front of America. He was shackled to the ceiling with both hands. The corroded metal and the smell of blood gave Martial satisfaction.

“Do you smell that, America? Familiar isn't it?”

How could it not be familiar? For just a few minutes, America assumed he had returned to the past where he had shackled, tormented, and slain his (Martial's) people. His sense of smell was virtually numb from the foul smells of decaying flesh, blood, crap, and feces all mixed together.

But he wasn't going to follow Martial's lead.

America took a look at Martial. His mouth arched into a mocking grin. “Familiar? I don't think so. Probably because it was unnecessary it wasn't worth remembering.”

Martial remained motionless, staring at the man in front of him as if he were an ant. “Of course it wasn't. Just like how being with Philipia wasn't worth remembering either.”

America snapped his head and glared at Martial. His eyeballs were protruding from his skull in the most dreadful way. As he was struggling, veins sprang out of his neck and forehead, alongside his fist and knuckles. “You fucker. You may physically have Philipia, but you can never have her heart...”

“N.e.v.e.r.”

The whip cracked, making a loud sonic sound that cut through the air and struck across his face, torso, arms, legs, hips, back, and head... Martial snapped his whip in every direction he could see.

“You think you can provoke me!?”

WHIP!

“Aren't I already?!”

WHIP!

“You're nothing! Nothing! America! The blood in your hands is no less than mine!”

WHIP!

“My hands may be stained with more blood but Philipia still loves me! She still chose me over you!”

WHIP!

“SHUT UP!”

WHIP! WHIP! WHIP!

The icy floor was soaked with blood. Martial's airflow was trembling with each breath he took. The hand holding the whip shook as rage boiled inside, straining to escape, trying to erupt.

America had been beaten so badly that no part of his skin was intact. But he didn't appear to feel it; he didn't feel the pain, but he did feel the joy returning, even if it was just words, and his words were more powerful than his whip.

“Hahaha... I finally realized...” Blood drips from his mouth mixed with saliva, and sweat.

Martial's eyes glowed and throbbed. He had nothing but the need to shout and destroy everyone in this earth, leaving no one behind.

America spits out blood and smirked. Blood stained his lips and teeth. “After Spain left, Philipia subconsciously lowered her guard and switched... It wasn't the other Philipia... it wasn't her.”

“Hahaha... All this time. She was Mahal.”

Listening to his muttering, listening to the sound of his voice and the way he said that nickname with endearment, something snapped in Martial's head.

It wasn't Filipia... She wasn't America's lover. It was Philipia... It was her. It was her all along.

“Hahaha... ahhhh what to do Martial, it seems like I still won.”

Exactly like back then. Martial stood in the distance, watching America hold Philipia in his arms, melting in his love. He can still see the love in her eyes; his own Philipia is in love with someone else...

It was at that moment, he can't waste any more time.

Philipia sat at the head of the table, blowing on the porridge and gobbling it. Even though it wasn't as good as Kati, it was enough to make her melt and hum in joy. Though, she did it slowly but silently.

Unfortunately, that was bound to be discovered because all of the leaders were paying attention to her actions even when they weren't looking.

Everyone ate their own bowl of porridge. Even if Greg was unwilling, he couldn't refuse his sister's request. “Oy, you idiots better eat every last bite of it, I don't wanna see leftovers—got it?” He said through gritted teeth and threatening eyes.

Egypt flinched and couldn't help shrinking. “This mongrel isn't a mongrel, he's a buffalo.” He whispered to Nepal who ate with relish.

China and Japan were used not to leave leftovers. Even if they dislike the food, they would still eat it.

Italy normally doesn't like porridge but after tasting Greg's cooking, he was willing to finish one bowl... Perhaps two bowls.

Iceland ate quietly. From time to time, he would peek at Philipia who ate with joy. He scanned her body and complexion and only after verifying she was okay, aside from her injury, there was nothing else to worry about.

After that autumn massacre, Iceland had a slight fear of seeing injuries on someone's stomach area. Even seeing blood in general scared him a bit. Sometimes he thinks he's pathetic he's still bothered by such things even after going through something worse.

“By the way. Are you okay, Iceland?”

Philipia's feelings towards Iceland was much closer than the rest. Even though he didn't go through the same things as Laos and South, for Philipia, Iceland was still someone she's closer to.

Iceland smiled. “I'm okay. Greg healed me.”

Philipia was surprised and turned to Greg who was blushing while pouting. “You knew how?”

“Well, after what they told me and what I saw Martial can do, I thought I could do it so I practiced a bit. It felt weird but, I was able to get the hang of it and save this guy's life,” Greg explained.

“It left a scar though.”

“Shut up! At least I healed you didn't I?”

China had just finished his third bowl and wiped his lips with a handkerchief saying, “As long as you have Armageddon's blood... That's what he said.”

Japan turned to Philipia, asking, “Do you know the Honeycomb Project?”

“I love honeycombs. They taste good, sweet, and perfect for the skin. It's a good moisturizer.” Egypt remarked.

Japan: “……”

Japan: “No. That's not it.”

Egypt huffed and leaned back, muttering to Nepal. “No wonder his skin looks dry like the dessert.”

Nepal nodded while getting another bowl of porridge.

Japan's eyebrow twitched a few times and turned to Philipia again. “Do you?”

Philipia had only ever heard of honeycomb project from Laurasia. At that time, she really didn't pay attention to it. “A bit?”

“Do you know Honeycomb project is an artificial project where they infuse Armageddon's blood sample to young leaders?”

Philipia subconsciously glanced at China who was also looking at her. His left eye was a dark brown color while the other was a bright yellow color.

“Then you...”

China smiled, quite amused. “No,” he said. “Those part of Honeycomb project didn't inherit everything from Armageddon, and the blood they used was a failed product. It wasn't really hers.”

“Oh, then we're not related?” It would've been nice to be related to China.

China on the other hand was thankful enough they weren't related. “No, we're not.” He refuse to be!

Italy rolled his eyes. He can see China's real reason even from where he sat.

“Speaking of Honeycomb. What about Lycoris?” Japan inquired again.

When they had a scuffle at the academy and before Martial carried her away, Philipia heard of Lycoris from Canada. She just caught a few words and understood very little of what had been said. In response, she shook her head. “What is it?”

This time, it was Italy who answered. “Lycoris is a nuclear bomb greater than anything the world has ever seen. It's even more destructive and dangerous than the bomb that dropped on Japan's country a long time ago.”

Japan grimaced at the thought of it.

“It was made by Canada—surprisingly he's smart enough to create such a deadly weapon. He made two, one of which that can be controlled via a signal or a certain trigger, which Martial had used on the academy. The second is probably the one he planted all over the world, the strongest and terrifying one. Canada explained he never got to finish the second one due to personal reasons, but he didn't think of using it for profit or even finish it all.”

“He didn't finish it because...” Spain's words trailed off as he shifted his sight to Philipia who was looking at him. He pursed his lips and no longer spoke. Although he didn't finish his words, everyone in the room knew the reason why.

Italy cleared his throat and continued, “He should've forgotten about it and hid it away, never again to see the light of the day. But because of his father, UK. His stupidity made it possible for Martial to get his hands on it. Not only did he take the whole thing, he even finished it himself... Canada deduced that Lycoris, in Martial's hand, should be even more powerful and destructive. The moment it explode, it'll spread poison invisible to the naked eye.”

“Meaning, it'll become a deadly weapon that even breathing could kill you.”

Philipia's heart was racing. The world would end if they weren't able to stop him. War and a plague caused by a man. In the future,

this planet may become uninhabitable.

Spain, who was quiet the whole time, finally spoke. “Let's wait for Norway.”

After a few hours, Norway came down followed by his secretary, Oslo. “I knew you were here when your room was empty.”

Norway walked straight towards Philipia and sat besides her, squeezing himself between Egypt.

Egypt: “……” What is wrong with these people?!

Norway's expression didn't even change as he placed an arm on the sofa behind Philipia. “What's wrong?”

Philipia didn't notice what had happened to Egypt and what Norway did, she was focused on reading the file China gave her regarding the bullet that Martial made.

“A-Bullet. I didn't know brother created such a thing.”

Greg sat on the sofa across her while glaring daggers at Norway. “If it's Martial, I wouldn't be surprised.”

Italy pondered and said, “It's weird.”

“Why?” Iceland asked.

Italy looked at their faces before stopping at Philipia's. “Lihim made a similar bullet.”

“Lihim?” Greg repeated. “How?”

“Back then, we would collect scraps of metal and broken weapons from every country with war. Sometimes, she'll take one item or two and take them apart. One time, she made a gun and a bullet. The bullet was infused with liquid that could corrode your insides or even explode. But they were failed experiments she made, although one of them was a bullet that can prevent healing. She said she made that bullet with one person in mind. But before she could finish it, America came and half of the group died. For a

while it was just us two going around the world sometimes it's just me... Afterwards, she disappeared after the underground was finished and sealed. The last thing I remembered was leaving all of her belongings and tinkering products on her repair table, at the very bottom where you found Kati's box."

The rest of the leaders were already informed regarding the underground club when Filipia left. Philipia thought since the line had naturally disappeared, perhaps the promise they made at that place can be considered automatically nulled.

Philipia recalled the moments Filipia entered the underground. "But aside from a few tools and photos, there was no bullets or anything."

This time, it was Greg who answered. "Martial said he discovered that place first didn't he? He must've taken it and completed it himself."

"That's what I thought. Then again, Lihim seemed to tolerate Martial. I remember whenever they meet or come across each other, Martial would often have this hostile look on his face, often rude and easily provoked whenever she's around. But Lihim didn't mind, even spoiling him a bit. Whenever we come back from a trip, she would bring back gifts for him, including the golden gun."

"I hate that gun..." Iceland couldn't help commenting, recalling the pain he went through after being shot.

"That gun was made by her, she personally melted, molded, and designed the gun and the bullets." Italy continued.

China takes out something from his bag: a ziplock with a bullet inside. "This was taken out from you." He said, sliding it towards Philipia.

Philipia picks it up and examined it. The bullet looked like any type of bullets, except the tail had a sharp points; if you ever try to take it out, it'll cling to your flesh and tangle itself inside. Not only will you bleed even more, you'll die even faster than a blink of an eye.

“I had someone take a look at it and discovered it's also filled with liquid that'll corrode you like acid. If the doctors weren't careful, the bullet would've also exploded.”

“What?! What kind of devil bullet is this?!” Egypt exclaimed as he looked at the bullet in Philipia's hand in horror.

“The kind of bullet that belonged to the devil himself.” Spain replied.

Norway stared worriedly at Philipia, who placed the bullet down. He couldn't imagine what it must be like to be shot by your own brother by such a thing. It would have been preferable if she had been slain rather than tortured in this manner.

“You think this ‘Lihim’ left these specifically for him?” Iceland couldn't help asking.

Italy didn't reply immediately. He pondered and thought about it but still couldn't come up with a proper answer. “I don't know...”

Greg scoffed. “Why would she leave something like this for him? She must've tried to hide it or she didn't think Martial to discover them.”

Japan shook his head. From Italy's description of Lihim, it seemed like she wasn't the type to be careless. “I don't think so. For me, I think she really did left it for him.”

“But why?” Egypt asked.

It was Philipia who replied. “She left it for him to protect himself.”

Italy nodded. “Most probably, she speaks highly of Martial.”

Philipia noticed Italy's sorrowful and concerned attitude.

“Lihim appeared in our home before I escaped.”

Italy's eyes widened and he couldn't help from standing up. “What did you say?! Lihim appeared!?”

Philipia nodded. “She gave me a phone and helped me escape.”

Italy's heart was erratic. He thought of many possible things why Lihim would appear at this time. “Where did she go?”

“I don't know. She jumped from the balcony and disappeared...” She said and muttered, “Her veil looked familiar.”

Italy slowly sits back down, his eyes looking into the distance. “She didn't even... Show herself to me. And I've been waiting for a long time.”

The living room was quiet for a moment. Nobody knows what to say or how to respond to Italy. Everybody knows how important Lihim was to Italy.

“I have something to say.” Philipia broke the silence while also changing the subject.

Norway chimed in. “What is it?”

Philipia pursed her lips as she glanced at Egypt and Nepal. “But you wouldn't like it...”

Back in the Philippines. America's shackles were finally undone. He glanced at the tray of food that wasn't edible, but he had to bear discomfort in order to survive.

America was thrown in the basement with a number of unused cells. In his spare time, he investigated the facility, thinking how he must've been the first prisoner after a hundred years, since the steels were corroded with symptoms of decay, the windows and bars were dusty, and the style was out of date.

America was reminded of his time as a soldier as he chewed the crusty bread. When he fought against his father, he used to eat the same stale and hard bread with his fellow soldiers. He recalled a day when they would camp in the middle of nowhere while bodies and corpses had been collected on a nearby mountain.

“Sir.”

America was startled and looked up to see Mark on the other side of the cell. “Y-you...”

Mark smiled and bowed. “Sir Martial asked me to get you.”

America processed his words for a minute. He stood up and stumbled his way over, gripping on the steel bar. “Mahal... Is Mahal here?”

Mark's face was sorrowful. He looks at the floor and doesn't respond, but America interprets his facial expressions as the answer.

“No... Why did she come back!?”

Mark didn't reply.

America gripped the bar and slid down to the cold floor. It felt like dreams and reality have began to merge together.

“What will happen now?”

Mark opened the cell and two servants came in to help him up. Their holds were gentle and careful.

“I wish I could answer that, sir. Unfortunately I am only a capital city, a man, a half royal. I don't have the answers to everything.”

America didn't appear to have the energy to walk; his equilibrium was fully managed by the two attendants. He leaned against one of them, his gaze fixed on the floor.

Philipia was standing in the living room. After a few days of planning and recuperation, they have finally set out to save America. She looked at Russia, who was sitting in the sofa, while Martial was in the balcony, leaning on the railings and wiping the golden Roscoe.

Philipia observed Russia for a moment before turning away, as if he was irrelevant to her. Russia was enraged but also indignant when he saw this expression. He scoffed and crossed his legs and arms, indifferent to the female leader and vice versa.

Philipia's body moved faster than her thoughts when America was finally brought in. She rushed up to him and embraced him, throwing her arms around his battered and filthy body. But she didn't mind because all she wanted to do was hold him and enjoy his warmth.

“Are you okay?” She asked, her face buried in his neck.

America's hands were chained so he can only hold her shirt. “It's not too late, go—Escape. You don't have to come back for me.”

Philipia shook her head. “No... You shouldn't be here in the first place.”

America stared over at Russia, who looked at them with an uncaring expression on his face; if only his eyes didn't look like they were filled with bullets and his hands weren't quivering into a fist, he would've believed he didn't care. He scoffed, and just like everyone else, he had no idea Russia would betray them. Trust is easier to break than to build.

Martial, on the other hand, proceeds to wash the pistol with little regard for the scene of two individuals hugging.

“Mark, take him away. Take him as far away from here...”

“No. I won't go...”

Russia's jealousy was about to boil due to the exchange between the long-lost lovers. Even though he pretended not to care and knew this wasn't his Sunshine, he couldn't help but feel shocked when Philipia looked at America with such eyes and embraced him.

“Mahal... leave.”

Philipia leaned back and glanced at America's expression. He had wounds and bruises all over his body, and not a single bit of his skin was intact. Even a massive whip mark that pricked Philipia's heart.

Martial, who was 'unbothered,' halted. His body stiffened, and his gaze moved to these two leaders.

Nobody forced her to do it, but Philipia willingly kissed America as tenderly, gently, and warmly as she could. America was astonished, but he kissed her back, touching her cheeks and bringing her close.

Russia stood up with a snap, attempting to separate the two. His eyes were bloodshot and bulging, making someone's hair stand on end. Mark instantly motioned for a few servants to stop him, while his secretary, who remained to the side, drew him back.

It was a brief but sincere kiss. To get such a kiss only God alone knows how bitter their feelings would have been if someone received such a blessing from someone who doesn't acknowledge anyone. Especially coming from Philipia.

Martial's laughter drew everyone's attention. Only Philipia disregarded him and hugged America as tightly as she could.

America had the sensation that butterflies were flapping their wings inside his belly. It was like swimming in a sea of syrup or eating the world's tastiest cotton candy. But it was shattered straight away by Martial's bloodcurdling cackle. It was ominous and overflowing with dread.

Russia's fast breathing and dilated eyes have finally subsided. He mocked at America, relishing what was about to happen to him.

Serves him right.

“Very good... Very good, Philipia! In front of me too! let us give them a round of applause!” Martial clapped, and everyone else followed suit. They looked like clowns in front of him. “Provoking me really isn't like you...” He sighed. “Are you planning something?”

Martial approached. As the pressure dropped like a ball, his steps gained velocity, and the room grew frigid and chilling.

“Ahhh... But it doesn't matter. Whatever it is that you're planning, it won't work.”

He snapped his fingers, and several guards rushed over to separate the two. America clutched Philipia, but she smiled and comforted

him, “It'll be fine...”

“it won't be...” Martial stated as he left the room while the guards pulled the two leaders as they followed suit.

Martial led them to a boat, and they sailed to a secluded island with zero facilities. It was a little island with an active volcano that erupted a long time ago and has been dormant for many years. They disembarked on the shoreline and proceeded along the mountain till they came to a clearing with two enormous tombs.

They should've taken advantage of the opportunity to flee, but Philipia reasoned that it wouldn't be a good idea to flee on a small island with just one boat, which was well guarded, to leave this area.

Martial approached the tomb and kneeled in front of it. Philipia investigated the stone and discovered it had names written on it.

Kati and Perla.

There was fear and anxiousness, but she maintained her cool; she couldn't mess this up. Philipia looked around the area, peering around the trees and foliage.

“Mark.” Martial called.

There was no instructions but Mark knew what he meant and what he had to do.

Mark pitifully looked at America then to Philipia with regretful and helpless eyes. “I'm sorry...”

America was suddenly grabbed by Russia. “You fucker!” He resisted and yelled, kicking and nudging the leader. Russia had been irritated for some time, so his tolerance was wearing thin.

Martial stayed kneeling and reverently looked at his father's memorial without looking back.

“America!” Philipia called and was going to intervene when she abruptly froze. Martial was the one who wrapped a pressure and a

frigid temperature around her body. “Let go! America! It's going to be okay! We'll be okay!” She shouted.

Martial eventually stood up and returned to stand alongside her. “I would've set him free if not for your unnecessary action. First, you protected him, now you kissed him—when will I be able to experience it, Philipia? I really want to know...”

His voice was patient. Philipia can hear genuine distress in his voice, as if she can see a young Martial asking her why he isn't loved, why nobody chosen him, why he doesn't deserve to be treated the same as everyone else?

For the first time, Philipia witnessed apathetic tears flowing down his cheeks. His eyes were empty and transparent, the glistening colors had turned bleak and black; his eyes appeared to be dead, appearing drained and worn-out, and she could see little dark hues under his eyelids.

Martial proceeds to bind her with a bulky rope provided by a subordinate without waiting for her response.

The work of bound was no joke, Martial was a professional when it comes to capturing and tying someone up. After tying her up, he takes out his gun and placed it on her temple, at the same time, America won against Russia even if his hands were chained. He snapped his head to Philipia and saw the muzzle pointed to her head, “Don't!!”

Martial looked at America with a dark and somber eyes. “So? Are you just going to stand there?” He asked. “Or will you—on your own initiative—stand in front of my father's grave?”

Philipia felt overwhelming fear and dread.

Mark approached and removed the shackles, replacing them with a rope and tying his hands behind his back. America felt that it wasn't tight enough, and it wasn't even properly knotted. He laughed for a second when he noticed Mark's glum countenance. It's like telling him he wouldn't be able to escape even if his hands weren't bound.

“You want to shoot me in front of your father's grave?”

“Yes.”

America swallowed blood and glanced at Russia who looked at him irritatingly while dusting his sleeves and pants. His eyes were filled with loath and resentment he wanted to punch his face again!

“This island...” It felt familiar.

“I'm glad you can still remember it. Yes, this was once the place where you shot my father, and the ground you're standing? That's where he died, the same place my mother died.”

Philipia's trembling lips opened, “Mama... She”

“I know. She's in UK's basement played like doll, right?”

“You knew!?” This time, Philipia struggled a bit, but the pressure and the rope became tighter.

Martial pressed the muzzle even more, stopping her from moving. “I knew from the start and I don't care. If the payment for Canada's bomb is mother's corpse, why shouldn't I give it?”

“That was mother's corpse! That was mama!”

“And so? She's dead.”

“You knew and you didn't do anything...”

Martial smirked. “And you discovered her but didn't take her back —your thinking and my thinking isn't that much different.”

Philipia pursed her lips feeling indignant, but he was right. For her, Perla was just a corpse now. Taking her back wouldn't really do anything.

“I heard you even asked someone to burn her corpse. UK seemed to have lost his mind, am I right?” He looked at America.

Philipia and America were both silent. They didn't say anything, but

this enraged Martial—and, like Russia, envy ate his rationality; it felt like eating muck and sinking at the bottom of the sea; it was difficult to breathe and it felt like someone didn't want him breath.

“Are you going to move or what?!” He pointed the gun at America. “Move or I'll shoot Philipia once again.”

America didn't budge but stated, “You wouldn't dare...” Didn't he wanted to have her? It shouldn't be possible for him to shoot Philipia.

BANG!

Philipia and America's pupils dilated. They turned around to see Mark slump to the ground, blood splattering in the air.

THUD.

Mark choked and blood sprayed relentlessly from his neck. “S-sir...”

“You knew this will happen sooner or later when you let Japan and Spain go.”

Mark closed his eyes as tears streamed down his cheeks. He choked out the words, “I apologize... Sir.”

“No... M-Mark...” America was paralyzed. He felt cold all over, from his feet to his head, as if someone had dumped water on him.

Philipia was unable to respond appropriately. She kept staring at his convulsing body while mark was covering the enormous wound on his neck.

“Now... Choose,” Martial pointed the gun back to America again. “Every refusal is one life.”

America gritted his teeth and exclaimed, “He was your capital city! He's your right hand man! How could you kill him?!”

“Choose...”

BAM!

One of the two servants who took him out of the cell was shot. They plummet to the ground, their lives disappearing in an instant.

“No! Stop!”

BAM!

The third was the second servant.

America sniffled as he choked on his tears. “I'll walk! I'll fucking walk!”

Philipia remained still. She was unable to move. The pressure had gone, and the rope was no longer as tight, but she didn't budge. This was not in the plan, however... They couldn't stop it.

“It'll be okay... It'll be okay, America.” Philipia couldn't tell if she was comforting him or herself.

America's vision blurred as fat tears streamed down his face. With a shudder, he looked at the two bodies being removed and at Mark, who turned his head to him, apologizing while someone stopped the flow from his neck.

“Hey, Philipia...”

The female leader looked at him. “No...” she responded while shaking her head. Just from the look on his face, she knew what he was about to say. “You don't have to say it...”

America grimaced, but forced a smile.

“Please! Don't!”

“It'll be okay,” He said. After swallowing a mouthful of blood, he uttered in the most softest voice that only belonged to her, “I love you.”

He walked, turned to his heel... He walked to his own death, to his own demise, to his own ending, without pausing or skipping a beat.

He looked at Kati's monument apologetically as he whispered. “I'm

sorry...”

Martial removed the safety and aimed the muzzle on the back of his head...

BANG!

Laos was flipping and shuffling his cards while listening to his secretary discuss their current problems when a card flew and fell from his hands.

The secretary naturally paused and waited for his leader to pick up the fallen card.

Laos moved his chair back and bent down, revealing The Lovers card in reverse.

“Is something the matter, sir?”

Laos picked up the card and studied it for a moment. Before placing the card in the deck again.

_____

I had to reread everything because I forgot most of the story and I was afraid I might repeat something or mention something that was already mentioned or even change something I didn't mean to. ಥ□ಥ

Chapter 59 : Atropa Belladona

A few days ago...

Egypt and Nepal were in the laboratory. The exterior is probably not particularly noteworthy, but the interior is filled with all sorts of advanced equipment.

Egypt swirled the transparent liquid from the flask and watched it turn clear to a beautiful purple color.

“Will it work?” Nepal asked as he removed the goggles and gloves.

“It will.” Egypt replied and transferred the liquid to a miniature bottle.

“What if it won't? Then...”

“Then it won't, but I'm confident it will work.”

Nepal leaned on the table and sighed. “I wish I had your confidence.”

Egypt snickered before taking a flannel with blue liquid. “But if something wrong will happen—”

“I know... You'll leave it to us.”

Egypt smiled before nudging Nepal. He was grateful to meet this person who tolerates and understand his unique nature. “Sorry you had to go through this, the pressure must've been unbearable.”

Nepal shook his head, a rare smile on his face. “It was okay, I was not pressured.”

When Egypt transferred the blue liquid to a different bottle, he said, “Then... let's hope for the best.”

Nepal stared at his friend before ruffling the back of his hair. “Don't

die... Or else she'll be sad, she'll be devastated."

Egypt released a shuddered breath as he held his beating chest. "I won't, I promise."

Nepal placed the two bottles in a small bag with a protective cover. "Alright... See you then..." He said and left the room.

Philipia was talking to Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Brunei on the phone when the door opened and Nepal came in.

Nepal didn't bother Philipia and proceeded to the table in the middle of the room where Singapore—who had just arrived yesterday— and France, alongside Canada who arrived today.

He placed the bag on the table. The leaders simultaneously turned their heads. Singapore uncomfortably pushed his glasses and took a sip of water.

Philipia ended the call and came up to them. When she saw the bag, she smiled. "Ready?"

Nobody replied but Philipia didn't need them to respond. She simply took the bottle with a purple liquid and turn to Nepal. "Are you going to use anesthesia?"

Present day...

"Miss, it's time to eat."

Philipia didn't reply, she remained seated staring blankly at one corner of the room.

The head maid placed the tray on the table and placed a handkerchief on her lap. She took the spoon and fork and sliced the food into small sizes then feeding it to her leader.

"Miss, I made your favorite... Although it isn't as good as sir Mark's."

Philipia still didn't respond.

The maid brought the spoon to her lips that remained shut. “Just a little... I'm sure it'll taste good.”

Finally, Philipia shifted a little and slightly opened her mouth. The head maid was ecstatic and carefully fed her.

Philipia chewed, slow and weak. The head maid thought her Miss didn't like it when she heard a soft, raspy voice saying, “It's good.”

The head maid's eyes sparkled. “Would you like another one, Miss?”

Philipia stared at the plate and slowly nodded. The head maid carefully and patiently fed her leader until there wasn't a grain of rice left. Although she chewed slow and her mouth didn't open immediately, it's fortunate enough she didn't starve herself or refused.

The head maid cleaned the table where Philipia was the only leader eating.

After they got back from the island, Martial was rarely at home and had been constantly going out. Even so, Philipia couldn't do anything. She looked down at the chain around her left ankle with a blinking green color.

“Miss, Sir Martial called and said he'll be back home late.” Luzon walks in and reported.

For a moment, she thought she heard Mark speaking. Philipia raised her head and glanced at Luzon. Because he was following Mark's orders, his punishment was light and only his left eye was taken.

Philipia looked away. “You don't have to tell me everything.”

Luzon hesitated but replied, “I was ordered to report to you sir Martial's movements.”

“Why?”

He couldn't answer. Martial's actions were so complicated that even the servants didn't know why—but the only person who understood him, was gone.

Philipia didn't speak anymore and stood up; the ankle chain making a subtle noise. Luzon was 5 feet apart, following after her with five maids and five attendants in tow.

Whenever she walks around, she is followed by a crowd. Philipia didn't feel like a princess that people read in story books or novels —she felt like a prisoner instead. Well—She is indeed a prisoner in her own home.

Oh wait—this isn't her home.

When they arrived in Martial's room—which he calls 'their' room—only the head maid and Luzon came in while the rest stayed behind and stood on the walls of the hallway.

"Would you like to take a bath or would you like me to read you a book?" The head maid asked in a gentle tone.

"Can you tell me what is happening outside?"

As the head maid was about to answer, her bracelet started flashing red; a warning to remind her that she shouldn't answer.

Seeing the flashing red dot, Philipia sighed and didn't insist. She instead walked towards the bed with a canopy and closed the curtains. "I want to sleep..."

The head maid and Luzon looked at each other, their faces had the same worried and helpless expression. Luzon stepped forward and bowed, followed by the head maid.

"Have a good rest, Miss."

When the two left, Philipia was finally alone. She went under the covers and buried her face on the pillow. The scent of citrus and sunshine made her drowsy and unknowingly fell asleep.

A few hours later. Martial, who was supposed to come home late, came back. He noticed the room was dark and cold; he could hear the soft snore and someone's familiar gentle breathing.

The corner of his lips couldn't help ticking upwards as he removed

his coat, gloves, belt, and shoes. His footsteps were muffled by the red fluffy carpet but he unconsciously walked a little quieter, as if he was afraid to wake someone from their slumber.

He slightly pushed the curtain and peeked inside to see Philipia's half buried face in the pillow and blanket where only the upper part of her face could be seen. Her face looked relaxed and less tense, eyebrows were no longer furrowed like it did two days ago.

He smiled and quietly slipped in the blanket and lay down beside her. Martial crawled closer to her side until his hand could wrap around her waist and his face resting on top of her head as he breath-in the scent of mint.

Martial was too busy these days and couldn't accompany Philipia, thus he asked Luzon to report everything to her about his movement. It may seem like he's exposing himself, but he didn't care. He simply wanted to remind her that he'll always come back and that she's the only one in his mind.

Who knows when, but his hand was lightly patting her hip like coaxing a child to sleep. Under his breath, he hummed a lullaby causing Philipia to flinch for a second then relaxing completely, melting in his embrace.

It was a peaceful and good sleep.

Somewhere.... There was a room with no windows or furniture, only a viewing glass that is a mirror on one side but a normal see-through mirror on the other.

Tethys rammed his body against the door but to no avail, the door remained sealed-tight. It wouldn't budge no matter how hard he kicked and punched.

Laurasia watched with mirth from the other side through the glass; she giggled every time Tethys failed over, and over, and over again...

Tethys panted heavily as his vision blurred for a moment from the lack of sleep, food, and energy. When he escaped and came home,

he didn't think his father and Laurasia would betray him and throw him in this room. He felt stupid and naive; he never once trusted his sisters but he trusted his father—even if he was an asshole.

“Open this door, now!”

Laurasia laughed out loud while hugging her stomach that tears came out. Mr. Pangaea, standing at the side, coldly watched his son continue to struggle with no signs of remorse or sympathy. He merely stared, seeming to assess and evaluate his performance. He does not smile or cry, he simply watches, as if he was observing a scientific experiment. He is a continent leader who is cold and calculating.

“HAHAHAHAHAHA! SO FUNNY! SO FUNNY!”

Mr. Pangaea suddenly said. “Shut her up.”

The man at his side turned to Laurasia and slapped her across the cheek, the sound causing the hairs of a few guards and servants behind them to stand. They can tell how much force was put into that slap and seeing Laurasia snap her head to the side and fall to the floor with a tumble.

Whimpering, she held her cheek. But as abnormal as she can be, she puffed and laughed once again.

“HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!”

The guards and servants grimaced and one by one, they all look away.

“I said... Shut. Her. Up.”

The man nodded and signalled his own subordinates at the side to hold Laurasia down as he put her on a leather face muzzle; muffling her laughter.

Gondwanda had only just arrive when she saw Laurasia getting gagged and made to wear a straightjacket.

It was as if they were apprehending a crazy patient.

“Laurasia...” Gondwanda muttered. She watched as four strong men held her down. “Father, you're hurting Laurasia...”

Mr. Pangaea didn't seem to care and didn't respond to Gondwanda's concern.

Unlike Laurasia, Gondwanda was fortunate to have moments like these where she regains a bit of clarity and act normally. It comes and goes without rhyme or reason, sometimes it doesn't come for a long time; it had no trigger or sign, it doesn't even give a warning when she ‘wakes up’.

Laurasia was gagged which muffled her laughter yet it was still heard coming from her throat. It gave the people in the room, chills. The laughter was almost scratchy; her cackle felt forced and desperate; like someone was scratching their nails on a metal surface.

Mr. Pangaea frowned and turned to glare at his men. “Take her away! It's too noisy!”

Gondwanda sympathetically watched her sister being taken away. Since Laurasia's use was done and Mr. Pangaea has no need for her, he simply gave an order and they automatically took her away.

Like a toy that he was done playing.

“Make sure you put ice on her cheek, please,” Gondwanda pleaded while staring at the red hand mark on her cheek as they took Laurasia away.

“Gondwanda, come here.” Mr. Pangaea called.

Gondwanda flinched when her name was called. She looked at Mr. Pangaea's back, hesitated, before taking a deep breath and walked towards him.

“Yes, Father?”

Mr. Pangaea asked, “What do you think of Tethys?”

Gondwanda peered at the one-way mirror. On the other side was

Tethys, hyperventilating on the floor.

Concerned, Gondwanda couldn't help approaching the glass, lightly pounding her fist. She shouts, “Tethys! Tethys! Father—” She turned to Mr. Pangaea who remained expressionless, “Tethys can't breath!”

“ I asked you a question, Gondwanda. What do you think of Tethys?”

Gondwanda paused for a second and replied, “He's my little brother.”

The servants standing at the back couldn't help but feel softhearted. Even if Gondwanda was in her chaotic state, she was still the nicest and kindest one in this family—even more so when she's in a state of clarity.

“Then you wouldn't mind taking his place?”

Gondwanda closed her mouth. She was aware their father didn't like them, they were merely failed experiments when trying to revive and recreate Armageddon's blood.

Gondwanda didn't respond immediately but her head bobbed up and down, nodding.

“I want... To help, Tethys.”

Mr. Pangaea glanced at Gondwanda for a moment, studying her expression. “Pathetic. A failure wanting to save another failure.”

Gondwanda flinched from his words.

Mr. Pangaea calls them ‘failures’ only towards Laurasia and Gondwanda. But in front of Tethys, he is silent and would rather walk away. Gondwanda knew he didn't like them (Gondwanda and Laurasia). He can give them a roof over their heads, food on their table, a bed to rest—but he would rather not be in the same room as them.

This time was an exception...

BANG!

Tethys punched the glass, yet it didn't even leave a scratch. Instead, from their side, they saw Tethys' purple and bleeding knuckles.

“Hundreds and thousands of years of hard work, all for nothing. Instead, I created three failures who have no use—even if you didn't have Armageddon's true blood, you should be able to use her skills.”

Gondwanda didn't respond, only leaning on the glass and stared at Tethys' weakening state.

“Useless pathetic fools. Why didn't you die instead? Might as well kill yourself for being worthless—trash, garbage, unwanted pieces, and ugly results.”

Gondwanda didn't listen. She can hear him, but none of his words would stay in her head.

Mr. Pangaea looked at Tethys slumped on the floor before he called for one of the servants from the back and ordered, “Open the ventilation.”

The servants bowed and did what he was told.

The blocked vents in the top right corner of the room spewed powerful air inside. Tethys drew a deep breath as the stifling and constricted feeling in his chest subsided. He felt like he had been in the water for a long time. He sensed the chill before it returned to normal room-temperature.

Mr. Pangaea sneered then turned and left the room, followed by his men that worked directly under him.

Gondwanda felt like someone was squeezing her throat and chest, preventing her from breathing properly. She looked at the door that was left open and the position from where Mr. Pangaea was just standing.

Although she didn't listen to his words halfway, she was still hurt and couldn't help crying. She bit the inside of her cheeks, stopping

herself from letting out a cry. Instead, she let out a small and heart-breaking whimper.

Tethys lay on the floor, catching for his breath. His vision was shaky, like a blurred camera lens. His ears were ringing and he can even hear his erratic heart beating so fast, pumping all the oxygen just so his brain can resume functioning; his whole body was trembling, his back soaked in sweat.

While his reaction was slow, through his blurry vision, he thought he almost saw someone he yearned to see.

“Philia...” His lips uttered a name. He squinted his eyes, hoping it could remove the fog. Lifting his heavy hand that seemed to weigh a thousand tons, he reached out, hoping they'll take his hand.

Yet he caught nothing but air. The warmth and embrace he was yearning for wasn't here.

All kinds of thought running through his mind, and then he thought about one thing...

“Philipia...”

That's it... That's her name.

A burst of strength came out of nowhere and pushed himself off the floor. He stood up, slowly, taking each strain movements with heavy breath.

“She still needs help...” He muttered under gritted teeth. “Wait for me. Philipia, wait for me.”

Philipia looked at herself in the mirror, ignoring the man who was undressing behind her.

“You'll get used to this soon, Philipia.”

Martial stood behind her as he slowly untangled the string from her dress. The tips of his finger would lightly brush against her skin.

“I've seen, touched, caressed, kissed, bit, licked, and loved your

body far too many times," he pressed his lips against her right ear, whispering.

Philipia can feel his hot breath which made the hair on her neck to stand, making her shiver.

"Yet, why are you still embarrassed?"

The dress finally fell lightly like a falling feather on the tiles floor. In front of the mirror, Philipia's body was fully exposed, some purple hickies still remain, refusing to heal, unable to heal.

Martial smiler warmly as his hands snaked around her hips, to her waist, and to her stomach.

"Philipia... Tell me. How do you want to feel good tonight?"

Philipia woke up feeling sore all over, especially around her lower body. Martial used some sort of trick to keep the pain and hickies on her body, although her body is still healing, it was slowed down to a pace of a normal man.

"Hey. Are you okay?"

Philipia groaned as she got out of bed and stood up wobbly. Ignoring the voice speaking in her head, she walked staggeringly towards the sink and wash her face.

"Silly girl, are you okay?"

Philipia turned the faucet off and stared at herself in the mirror. They did so much last night Philipia still feels tingly and ticklish.

"I'm okay," she replied.

Maharlika was dumbfounded. "What happened to you? Why is your body..."

"It refused to heal?" Philipia continued. "Martial did something and now it takes about a week for the hickies to disappear."

"Why didn't you fight back?"

Philipia chuckled weakly. Her hue blue hair fell on her face she combed it backwards with her hand. “It felt good.”

Maharlika was dumfounded. “What?”

Philipia smiled and walked below the shower before turning it on. Without a proper answer and doubting if he heard it right, Maharlika asked again:

“What do you mean ‘it felt good’? Silly girl, are you hearing yourself?”

Philipia took a shower, running her hands on her hair.

“I meant what I said...”

“Philipia!” Maharlika shouted.

Philipia opened her eyes and turned the shower off. “I gave Martial what he wanted. I drowned myself in pleasure and enjoyed the moment, I followed what he wanted, felt what he wanted, said what he wanted... I did it all for today. I gave him one final enjoyment.”

Maharlika felt confuse and Philipia knew what he was feeling. “I want to ask,” she said.

Maharlika didn't know how to react but subconsciously, he answered, “What is it?”

“If I die, will you guys also die?”

“What do you mean? Who's dying?”

Philipia's lips ticked upwards. Leaving the shower and standing before the mirror that covers a whole wall, she asked again, “If I die, will you die? If I die, will you disappear?”

Maharlika suddenly felt a foreboding premonition. “Silly girl... What are you talking about? Of course we'll disappear! Not just me, but everyone! Even your most hidden and locked up alter will disappear!”

Philipia nodded as if finally getting the answer she wanted. “That's good—but will you also feel my pain?”

Maharlika couldn't take it anymore. It took a lot of effort to break out and communicate to her again, but the moment he came out, this was the kind of conversation he's getting?

“Silly girl! Please... Tell me what you're planning.”

Philipia went back to the bedroom and took a random dress from the wardrobe that she and Martial share before going back to the bathroom, and locking the door behind her.

“Silly girl! Philipia! What are you doing?”

Philipia searched the drawers inside the bathroom until she finds a shaver. Using her hands, she breaks it apart and takes out the razor.

Maharlika was beginning to get nervous. “Philipia, stop! Don't do this again! This is too much!”

Philipia remained quiet and ignored Maharlika who was trying to take over her body. There was the sensation of fading away to the back of her mind but she fought against it. Lifting her dress, she made clean slash in her stomach, spilling blood all over the place within seconds.

“Philipia! Stop! STOP!”

Philipia indeed stopped when she dropped the small razor. Maharlika thought she finally snapped out of it when the next second, she did something even more abnormal.

She dig her hand in her wound, aggravating the sound to open even more.

Philipia felt pain, not only her, everyone in her head.

Maharlika was screaming, banging against her mind. Within the palace in her mind, rows of doors were shaking, banging, begging to stop, stop, STOP!

It hurts it hurts it hurts, IT HURTS IT HURTS IT HURTS IT HURTS IT HURTS IT HURTS!!!!!!

Red, laying on a scarificial table threw up even more blood. The red waters underneath the altar were rising like a high tide. Not far, the cross where Filipia was nailed screamed and wailed in agony and pain; struggling and twisting to break free from her shackles; blood kept pouring out of her orifices, dropping to the red waters that still kept rising.

Maharlika shouted, “Stop! STOP! PHILIPIA STOP! WE'RE HURTING! YOU'RE HURTING US!”

Philipia remained deaf from his pleading and continued to dig her hand until half of it were buried inside. She paused and fiddled inside, every movement that she makes kept pushing out more and more blood, staining her dress and legs.

It was a horrifying sight of blood and gore, yet the person involve remained unfazed and normal, as if she was simply looking at herself in the mirror.

A few minutes later, Philipia pulled something out of her stomach. It was a miniature bottle with purple liquid inside.

With great difficulty, Maharlika said, “You're hurting us, Philipia.”

Philipia opened the bottle and stared at it with shaky hands. “From now on, you won't be in pain anymore.”

“Do you hate us?”

“No.”

Maharlika smiled. “I see... Will you miss us?”

“Yes.”

“Okay.”

That was all he could say.

The palace in her mind, the rows of doors finally quieted down, as if the people behind it disappeared.

Looking at herself in the mirror again, Philipia wore a compassionate and kind smile. “Goodbye.”

On Tethys' side, he leaned against the wall and stared at his sister Gondwanda standing by the door. The blood had dried on his face but his appearance was no different from Philipia. His shirt was open, showing his chest and well-defined collarbone while drenched in sweat.

“What are you doing?” Tethys asked with a raspy voice.

Gondwanda hesitantly steps inside, stuttering, “I... I want to help.”

Tethys looked into her eyes and realized she was ‘awake’.

“Oh... No wonder.” Tethys grimaced.

“Go and run... Tethys, go and run.”

“You're helping me?” He asked in surprise.

Tethys wouldn't deny nor refuse this help. Anyways, he wasn't close to her but he knew Gondwanda was the most reasonable of the three.

Gondwanda nodded, fiddling with the hem of her shirt. “I did many bad things to you and inconvenienced you for a long time. I want to make it up to you...”

Tethys was quiet for a moment before he stood up, a bit wobbly before limping out of the room.

When passing by Gondwanda, Tethys muttered a ‘Thank you’.

Gondwanda's eyes widened, glistening as tears threatened to come out.

“Follow my servant... He'll take you outside. Your friends are waiting for you.”

Tethys nodded and followed after the man who had Gondwanda's crest, a symbol that he is a loyal and helper of hers.

Gondwanda stared at Tethys' back for a moment before stepping inside the white room, replacing Tethys. She sat gracefully on the floor and leaned against the wall. Although she looked lonely and alone from the viewing mirror, Gondwanda was happy and joyful to be of use to her brother.

The servant that led Tethys out of the facility that he was brought in was skillful. He was like a fish that knew his way around, he could sneak from the side without being noticed and even act natural when being questioned. Of course, they took a detour and easily escaped.

Tethys got inside a car and the servant drove all the way to the outskirts of the city where a boat was already waiting.

During the car ride, Tethys was given a bag by the servant and a towel to clean his face. He wiped away the dry blood stain and changed his clothes and made sure there were no other belongings that possibly have trackers on them.

When they arrived, Tethys went out now wearing a black hoodie.

“Sir!” The servant called and got out of the car. “The lady asked me to give you this.”

The lady he mentioned was Gondwanda.

Tethys looked at the small chip on the servants palm. “What is this?” he asked as he examined it.

The servant shook his head. “I am not sure. The lady simply asked me to give it to you and help her pass it to the female leader.”

Tethys frowned. “Which female leader?”

“She said you'll know immediately if I tell you.”

Tethys instantly thought of Philipia. He didn't ask anymore and placed the chip in his pocket.

“The lady told me that you have to make sure she'll be able to receive it.”

“Don't worry. I'll make sure of it.”

The servant finally felt at ease. He took a step back and bowed before fulfilling his final order. “The other leaders are waiting for you. Just head straight and you'll see an estuary with a boat docked by the side.”

Tethys waited for the servant to leave before following his directions. He walked for roughly 50 minutes before spotting a boat waiting for him discreetly. Italy, China, and Germany greeted him from the deck.

“Continent leader Tethys. Where the fuck have you been?” Italy scoffed, but there was a smile of relief on his face.

Tethys removed the hood and smirked. “I was just placed on house arrest, shouldn't you be more lenient on me?”

Germany helped Tethys get on the boat. “You don't know how worried Italy was. He wouldn't stop walking back and forth while muttering—”

“Germany!” Italy exclaimed with a flushed face. “Mind your own business!”

China rolled his eyes. “What happened to you?”

Tethys sighed and began to recount what had happened as the boat sailed away.

Tethys was given a bottle of water and some food to lessen the pain from his stomach.

China's right hand was on his chin, pondering. “This is for certain Mr. Pangaea had some sort of deal with Martial. With his obsession to revive Armageddon's blood, Martial should've used himself as the bargaining chip. Not only that, Greg and Philipia are there—but it's unlikely he'll use Philipia. Either it's him or Greg.”

Italy frowned. “But Mr. Pangaea already has Greg doesn't he? Greg couldn't even go back home, he's literally a soldier of Pangaea—or a citizen to be exact.”

“It's exactly why he couldn't touch him. Greg is a talented soldier and an essential. If he were to touch him, he'll lose a limb and support.” China explained.

Tethys said. “Pangaea doesn't lack talented soldiers nor does it lack a limb and support. But Greg is someone who gained a lot of support throughout the years staying in the country. He has a natural charisma and is a good leader that can lead hundreds and thousands of soldiers.”

Italy raised a brow. “Is he that important? I couldn't tell.”

China leaned against the railings, his right hand still on his chin while his left hand supports his right elbow.

Tethys sat one of the crates as he took a bite of his bread.

“Either way, whatever he's planning and his reason, this is enough to fight back.” Tethys said as he finished the bread and drank a mouthful of water.

“By the way, what happened to your side?”

When he got home, he was immediately restrained and didn't know what had happened in the last few days.

China and Italy glanced at each other before China spoke and recounted to him the series of events that had happened.

There was solemnity in the air. Tethys' eyes grew dimmer and dimmer.

“What about North? How is he?” Tethys inquired.

China answered, “He went home and he took care of everything on South's side. Though I heard some people protest against him stepping foot in their country.”

Italy added, “Understandable. His way of reigning is different from South.”

“But he's not there to reign and replace South, he's there to arrange his funeral and... Well.”

China's next words trailed off at the end.

“It must've been hard, I apologize I wasn't there.” Tethys spoke, breaking the depressive atmosphere.

Italy braced himself against the railings. “You are not required to apologize. We're grown men; you don't need to act like our father.”

Tethys sighed. “Even so, it felt like I failed to do my job as your leader—as the whole continent's leader.”

He stated at the end.

Italy cringed. “Gross. It doesn't suit you to be so self-deprecating. It's like seeing a maniac cry out in misery.”

Tethys was about to rebuke him when Germany walked out from the control room. “It's time! Everyone, prepare yourselves.”

Tethys frowned and queried, “Prepare what exactly?”

Italy took a deep breath before taking his phone and dialed a number.

China turned to Tethys. “There's one thing I forgot to mention...”

Just as China was about to explain, Tethys felt an unexplainable pain coursing through his whole body. He fell to his knees and released a bloodcurdling scream.

“Tethys!” Italy exclaimed.

Hearing the commotion, Germany walks out once again and sees Tethys curled-up in pain on the floor while Italy is calling out his name.

“What happened?!” Germany exclaimed.

“I don't know!”

“Tethys! What's wrong?! What happened?!”

Tethys felt like he was being burned alive on the inside. It feels like a never-ending wave of terror, pain, and misery where your skin is being slowly stripped away.

He started to feel like the burning waves are getting more intense and the pain won’t end and the air all around is getting hotter to the point where it gets hard to breathe, yet the pain only gets worse from there...

Meanwhile in the Philippines, everyone was in disaray. It was extremely chaotic and lively in the mansion.

Especially in Martial's room.

Philipia was in Martial's arms, blood and golden liquid were all over the floor, creating a contrasting puddle. Martial shouted impatiently:

“WHO WAS IN-CHARGE OF GUARDING HER?! CAN'T YOU DO YOUR JOB PROPERLY?! WHERE'S THE MEDICAL TEAM!? WHERE'S LUZON!? HURRY AND DO SOMETHING!”

All the maids and servants were running back and forth, filled with panic and fear.

Who knew what had happened, but their young Miss was poisoned that even Martial couldn't heal. While ordering and scolding anyone he sees, he doesn't stop or pause to heal Philipia's body.

From his arms, he can feel her warmth slowly diminishing like a candlelight swaying in the wind. Panic filled his chest and his mind turned blank. He held her weak body in his arms, afraid to even move an inch.

Martial was the first to discover Philipia in this state. After he came back he discovered a lot of blood and Philipia's body convulsing on

the floor. He didn't even hesitate to heal her body, using all the energy and power he has.

But it was as if Philipia was like a basin with a hole, no matter how much power he injected, it didn't work.

Nothing worked.

Finally, the summoned doctors and nurses finally arrived and asked Martial to place her on a flat surface. He did what they asked and stood by the side as they performed emergency treatments while also examining her body.

They did everything they could. Performing medical treatments, checking her vital signs over and over. But no matter what they do, no matter what they did, her body refused to cooperate and continue to deteriorate; her life slowly being sucked away by something they couldn't see or treat.

Martial felt it, everyone in the room felt it.

“Get away!” Martial shouted.

He shoved a doctor aside and held Philipia's hand as he cup her cheek with the other.

“Philipia...” He whispered.

Philipia's eyes opened into small slits before shifting her sight to Martial.

“Why are you doing this...” He asked.

Martial never thought she was daring enough to do this, he never thought she would even do this. A slight miscalculation—a scene he did not even think that was plausible.

“If you die... Your friends and everyone you cared for, will all die.”

Even at her deathbed, Martial didn't even spare to threaten her. But this threat was almost like a plea, a deniability.

“Philipia... I killed America, I killed South, I'll kill China and the rest. Tethys may still be alive but I will kill him too... I SWEAR I'LL KILL HIM! I'LL KILL EVERYONE! GREG, MAGDALO—EVERYONE!”

Philipia merely looked at him in a daze. Her eyes were open a little, her long eyelashes were wet and a few golden teardrops were still hanging on them.

“You...” Philipia muttered.

Martial leaned his ears closer and heard her last words:

“I... Hate you.”

The sky rumbled and the clouds turned gray. It was afternoon and times like this in their country should be hot. Yet the sky was gloomy and the air was cold, like death had landed and knocked on their doorstep.

Everyone sobbed as quietly as possible yet a few escaping whimpers and cries were still heard.

They felt it, everyone felt it.

Their leader had died.

From the ends of the streets, the alleyways, the eaves, everyone stopped and mourned.

As if going crazy, Martial kept repeating her name like a chant.

Everything he ever wanted was being taken away, his present, his future, the very essence of his being. Of course he fought to win, to become sane again. Martial was always the type who got up after every fall, always ready to go again full power—ask anyone. Crying was never on his list of options, winning was.

Until today...

As if the thread of reason snapped. Martial started laughing like a madman. Everyone in the room kneeled and their foreheads touched the floor. They kowtowed, a submissive position.

They can feel it. His pain, his anger, his hatred. Everyone was being influenced by his emotions that they all bowed their heads and allowed his power to take over.

Luzon was the first to speak.

“Your orders, Sir.”

Martial was either laughing or sobbing or perhaps both. But he slowly turned around and answered:

“I want blood... I want rain of blood and anguish”

Everyone stood up like robots. When they raised their heads, their eyes were all glowing bright yellow. Luzon snapped his finger and everyone scattered in an orderly manner as if they had practiced it a million times.

Somewhere, Greg and Jack all turned their heads in the same direction at the same time. Even from afar, they can feel a trace of movements.

Greg cursed, “Shit! Shit! Shit!”

With them were Spain, Sweden, Iceland, and Japan. They all saw their expression morphing into shock and trepidation.

Spain couldn't help asking, “What's wrong?”

Jack remained seated while his hand rested on the table, trembling and clenched together while Greg stood up and walked back and forth, pacing around the room.

Jack answered, “Fuck. Martial... It's Martial. He's making a move.”

Japan narrowed his eyes. “Just as we thought, but it's so much worse.”

“Greg! Calm down!” Sweden called.

Greg groaned and scratched his hair into a mess as he replied, “Calm? You want me to calm down? I can't fucking calm down

when I can feel his boiling anger. It's like floating on scorching magma!”

At this moment, everyone's cellphones started ringing, different ringtones resounded in the room at the same time. Everyone takes out their phones and answers in their languages.

“Hello?”

There was a pause until Japan broke the silence. He hung up and said, “Was this part of her plan?”

Jack and Greg turned to him.

At the same time, Iceland suddenly stood up and stormed out of the room.

“What happened?” Jack asked.

Japan answered with a shaky voice, “Dying?”

———————

End of book 2

Author's Note

Omgggggggggg you finally finished the second book!

We did guys! We finally finished the second book! Woo woo woo!

Everyone give yourselves a round of applause...

It makes me happy and melancholic. To think it took a long time and long-term absence to finish this book. Makes you wanna pop open a wine and pour it out into your school's fountain and drop a red food coloring huh?

Kidding!

(Don't do it. A drop of food coloring can turn your fountain into a bloody fountain)

Anyways. Book 3 will soon come up (dunno when but soon).

Hope you guys enjoyed and hope you all found the clues from book 1 and early chapters of book 2 and how it all connects.

Now, I hereby declare book 2 ***finish***!

See you all again at book 3

—G.D